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Chairman: Mr. Choi ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 85 to 105 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Widhya (Cambodia): First of all, allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman, as well as to congratulate the members of the First Committee. We are sure that with your political experience and diplomatic skill you will lead our Committee to achieve new successes. I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, for his important contributions to various disarmament and security issues. I also would like to associate my delegation with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Cambodia has always been committed to the cause of international peace and security. We strongly believe in multilateralism, that is, that regional and international peace and security should be ensured through a multilateral architecture.

It is indeed discouraging to see that there has been no significant progress towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. In that connection, despite the recent omission of the section on disarmament and non-proliferation in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting — which constitutes a real setback — Cambodia believes that Members States must carry on with their efforts to analyse the various disarmament issues in the light of the current international situation.

We look to the Organization and to this Committee to continue providing the necessary forum where Member States can create the international atmosphere needed to appropriately address the challenges complete disarmament entails. It has already been proven that strengthened multilateralism will enhance the role of the United Nations in global affairs. For that reason, all of us should work together in the spirit of multilateralism to strengthen global norms in order to collectively eliminate threats to peace and security.

There are two important tools for building a peaceful and stable world, namely, disarmament and development. By controlling conditions that increase the likelihood of armed conflicts, resources can be freed and allocated for other activities such as economic and social development. Concurrently, sound development policies and strategies will play a significant role in efforts to eradicate poverty, promote economic growth and, in the long run, create an environment conducive to long-term security.

As we participate in this debate, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Cambodia's unequivocal commitment to the noble goals of general and complete disarmament. That commitment stems from the misery and suffering that Cambodians had to

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endure for 24 long years. Cambodia is firmly convinced that more weapons will not make the world more secure. Disarmament, like any other item on our agenda today, cannot be dealt with in isolation; there is an urgent need for disarmament to be addressed at all levels — national, regional and international.

For those reasons, the Kingdom of Cambodia ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention on 19 July 2005. Cambodia supports the strengthening of international law, which, inter alia, includes the major instruments to curb the arms race such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We are dismayed and deeply concerned about the inability of the recent NPT Review Conference to achieve any results. Similarly, we regret the failure to reach consensus on these very crucial issues in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting. Cambodia profoundly believes in the necessity for and benefits of disarmament.

While Cambodia has enjoyed peace and a return to normalcy, our people still have to contend with the legacy of landmines and unexploded ordnance left over from past wars and conflicts. The Royal Government aims to clear Cambodia of all landmines by 2012. Furthermore, in addition to the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations, our Government has adopted landmine clearance as an additional Millennium Development Goal for Cambodia.

The growing gap between rich and poor is fuelling inequality. The continuation of that quandary will inevitably provide additional fuel for conflicts. Because small arms are easy to use and readily available, they have become the weapons of choice for today's combatants. As a post-conflict country, Cambodia fully understands the importance of the proper and systematic collection, destruction, and registration of small arms and light weapons. Our Government has conducted six national projects to achieve those goals, and has undertaken efforts to ensure the safe storage of small arms and light weapons and to search for hidden stockpiles.

Special emphasis has been given to a "weapons for development" programme, in which incentives are offered to communities to report illegal stockpiles and cooperate in their collection and destruction. Incentives include improved educational facilities and provision of appropriate agricultural tools. As a result, more than a 100,000 small arms have been collected and destroyed. In addition, nationwide awareness programmes were conducted to appeal for public participation.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has also embarked on a legislative campaign to control small arms and explosives. Specifically, on 26 April 2005, the National Assembly adopted a law on the management of weapons, explosives and ammunition, which establishes rules for supply, transportation, repair and production of weapons, explosives, and ammunition, as well as penalties for non-compliance. Moreover, the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, has also been submitted to the Council of Ministers and on to the National Assembly awaiting for ratification.

We realize, as do many others, the necessity of strengthening multilateral efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation, as there is an increasing need for multilateralism to become more assertive and proactive within the changing dynamics of international security. Furthermore, efforts at the bilateral, subregional and regional levels should continue to be pursued in parallel with a multilateral approach. It will take the concerted efforts of all of us to ensure that the world becomes a safer place to live in, now and the future.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): We congratulate you, Sir, and are confident that, with your great experience and skills, you will guide the work of our Committee to a successful conclusion.

We also would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the international organizations in Geneva, for the excellent manner in which he guided the work of the Committee during the fifty-ninth session.

We align ourselves fully with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement to be delivered by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). However, we would like to highlight some

points important to us on the issue of disarmament and international security.

This session is taking place on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. What has the United Nations, as the only universal multilateral organization, accomplished in the field of disarmament and international security? A candid and honest overview of the global situation in that field is required for the purpose not only of taking stock, but also for developing joint and collective measures to remedy the situation and advance further in promoting the noble cause of disarmament.

Today, our world is still filled with insecurity and injustice. Armed conflicts, acts of aggression and violence, terror, interference in the internal affairs of States, ethnic strife, civil wars, hunger, disease and poverty are the major threats to international peace and security. Weapons of mass destruction also pose a great danger to the very survival of humankind. To ensure enduring global peace and security, we must together exert all-out efforts and act collectively to address and overcome those challenges. One cannot seek security for oneself alone; only a collective approach can bring about positive results, including in the field of international arms control and disarmament.

The world summit held two weeks ago adopted an outcome document that, to our regret, omitted the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation. That was an opportunity missed at a crucial moment for the world community to give direction and to address the critical issues confronting us all. In that regard, the Lao People's Democratic Republic cannot but share the disappointment of the peaceloving community at that critical omission. We must therefore, at this session, reaffirm the need to uphold multilateralism and work for multilaterally agreed solutions, the only efficient method of addressing disarmament and world security issues.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic remains concerned about the danger of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, which constitute a threat not just to international peace and security, but to the very existence of life on the planet. In that regard, we regret that the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in May, was unable to reach consensus on the substantive questions surrounding the three pillars of the NPT. We are of the view that commitments to the NPT should be lived up to by States parties and that the NPT should remain a cornerstone of global nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

Recognizing the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which contributes to the process of nuclear disarmament, the Lao People's Democratic Republic deposited an instrument of ratification of the Treaty with the United Nations in October 2000 and has actively participated in the seminars organized by the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organization in the region. That shows our strong commitment to nuclear disarmament and to the creation of a world free from the nuclear threat. In that context, we welcome the convening of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York from 21 to 23 September. We also welcome the adoption by the Conference of the Final Declaration and measures to promote the entry into force of the CTBT. In that regard, in order to make the Treaty effective, we deem it necessary for all States that have not done so — and in particular the nuclear-weapon States — to sign and ratify the Treaty.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic strongly believes that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a positive, helpful step towards the goal of nuclear disarmament and freeing humankind from nuclear weapons. In that spirit, we welcome the convening of the Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held in Mexico from 26 to 28 April 2005. We also welcome and support the strong aspirations of peoples in many parts of the world in their efforts towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We underscore that the total achievement of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is important to enhancing international peace and security. As a State party to the Bangkok Treaty establishing the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has done its best to contribute to ASEAN's common efforts in that respect.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic remains of the view that the absolute and most credible guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that only the total elimination of nuclear

weapons can prevent terrorists from acquiring them. We therefore welcome all efforts at the international, regional and national levels aimed at reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons. In that regard, we are of the view that urgent consideration must be given to the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. It is our delegation's hope that the ASEAN-sponsored draft resolution initiated by Myanmar on nuclear disarmament will be given considerable support by all Member states, especially the nuclear-weapon States.

Like many other delegations, the Lao People's Democratic Republic very much regrets that the Conference on Disarmament — the only multilateral disarmament forum for deliberation and negotiation on questions related to arms control and disarmament agreements — has again failed to agree on a programme of work this year. We hope that all parties concerned will redouble their efforts, demonstrate the necessary flexibility and move forward in their efforts to pursue both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

The failure of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to agree on an agenda for its session this year is another setback to multilateral disarmament efforts. In that context, we urge that the multilateral disarmament machinery should be strengthened so that it can move the process forward to overcome the deadlock.

Although the United Nations has achieved only mixed progress in all areas of activity during the past 60 years, including in the field of disarmament and international security, there should be no room for despair and discouragement. If we are to succeed, our joint mission must be to move forward. Therefore, one of the most urgent tasks at the United Nations is to work seriously together towards the common objective of achieving general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. Disarmament cannot be fully achieved without the political will and support of all United Nations Members. It is time that we spare no effort to get the disarmament process back on track, move forward and build a world of peace and equitable development — a world free from nuclear weapons. On that note, I wish the present session of our Committee great success.

Mrs. Laohaphan (Thailand): Allow me at the outset to join other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Bureau on your election.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and with the statement to be made later by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Last year in this room, many delegations, including mine, expressed concerns over the slow pace of disarmament, the violations of non-proliferation commitments and the threat of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists. We had hoped that the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly and the year 2005 — the so-called year of United Nations reform — would offer a renewed phase of cooperation.

What has happened throughout the year unfortunately tells us another story. Not only did we witness the failure of the once-in-half-a-decade Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we also failed to include in the summit outcome document (resolution 60/1) any measures to strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In addition, the impasses in the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission remain unresolved. My delegation would like to stress once again that in order to overcome those deadlocks, both disarmament and non-proliferation should be addressed in a constructive and balanced manner. We — both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States — have a shared responsibility to carry out our roles in disarmament and non-proliferation.

With regard to development and disarmament, my delegation notes with concern the continued growth of global military expenditures at the expense of resources that could have been used for development. In his recent report on the work of the Organization (A/60/1), the Secretary-General alerts us to the fact that global military expenditures exceeded $1 trillion in 2004 and are projected to keep rising. The relationship between disarmament and development is obvious to us. We therefore support the central role of the United Nations in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We also encourage the international

community to contribute to economic and social development the resources made available as a result of disarmament and arms limitation agreements.

Concerning weapons of mass destruction, Thailand has a firm policy not to develop, possess, acquire, proliferate, test or transfer nuclear weapons or related materials. Thailand attaches high importance to the implementation of its obligations as a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), as well as to a number of bilateral, regional and multilateral efforts and agreements on non-proliferation, including through the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the South-East Asian region.

With regard to the threat of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists, Thailand supports the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and has provided its full cooperation to other friendly countries in opposing nuclear proliferation and illicit trafficking and in strengthening capacity-building with regard to export controls.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of the long-negotiated International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and is pleased to report that Thailand became a signatory of the Convention on 14 September 2005. Thailand is now strengthening its domestic legislation and measures aimed at securing and physically protecting nuclear materials against theft, sabotage or access by unauthorized persons. We also welcome the decision of the diplomatic conference held in Vienna in July this year to amend the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. The Government is reviewing those specific amendments with a view to acceding to the Convention at the earliest possible date.

With respect to the additional protocol, Thailand considers it to be a confidence-building measure and an effective international verification system for providing assurances of peaceful uses and legal transactions related to nuclear equipment and dual use. We see the merit of making the additional protocol a new verification standard. In that connection, Thailand is pleased to report that we concluded and signed an Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on 22 September this year. Thailand will spare no effort to fully implement the Additional Protocol once the constitutional requirements for its entry into force have been met.

My delegation has been following closely the situation on the Korean peninsula, as it has implications for the stability of the entire Asian region and beyond. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks, issued in Beijing on 19 September, and wishes to congratulate all parties concerned on their tireless efforts. It is my delegation's hope that the parties will fully implement their obligations.

I now turn to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Having participated in the Fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT last month, my delegation fully welcomes the Conference's Final Declaration and measures to promote the Treaty's entry into force. For its part, the Royal Thai Government is now in the final stage of amending and enacting domestic laws and regulations in order to ratify the Treaty. The ratification process is expected to be completed in 2006.

As one of the countries hard hit by the tsunami last December, my delegation also welcomes the ongoing application of the CTBT verification system, in particular the International Monitoring System, for its scientific and civil benefits and because it applies to tsunami warning systems. My delegation pledges its full support to enable the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to develop and turn that initiative into concrete action.

With regard to conventional weapons, my delegation views the problems posed by the misuse of such weapons as one of the serious threats to peace, security and development. Such problems incur a grave human cost and greatly affect human security. In addressing the illicit trade and traffic in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, my delegation attaches great importance to the full implementation, at the national, regional and international levels, of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons. My delegation looks forward to the formal adoption and full implementation of the draft international instrument concluded by the Open-ended

Working Group in June this year, aimed at enabling States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. It is my delegation's hope that the discussion that will take place during the forthcoming Programme of Action review conference in July next year will bring about concrete outcomes, including ways and means to address the problem of ammunition, and will chart a future direction for the international community with a view to addressing more effectively the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons.

My delegation was also heartened to see the reference to the Ottawa Convention in the summit outcome document, and supports the implementation of the elements contained therein. Thailand also welcomes the Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan, as well as the recent ratification by Vanuatu as the one hundred and forty-seventh State party.

To arrive at the full and effective implementation of instruments and agreements on small arms and light weapons and on landmines, my delegation hopes that States that are in a position to do so, as well as the private sector and the non-governmental organization community, will spare no effort in rendering assistance to States in need.

Last but not least is the issue of improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee. My delegation is pleased to see that progress has been made on that issue and welcomes the adoption by consensus of resolution 59/95 in that connection. The resolution sets out a number of practical measures to strengthen the effectiveness of our work. My delegation hopes that the resolution will be implemented in its entirety, together with the three other significant General Assembly resolutions on revitalization — resolutions 58/126, 58/316 and the recently adopted 59/313.

My delegation also welcomes the improvement in participation in the Register of Conventional Arms and in the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures, as well as in the national reports on small arms and light weapons. We would also like to suggest that a simple reporting format be established for all resolutions requiring information from Member States so as to enable them to more effectively and systematically provide information to the Secretariat. The Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures serves as a good example in that regard.

Finally, my delegation pledges its full support and cooperation to you, Mr. Chairman, throughout the course of our deliberations.

Mr. Mine (Japan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Chot, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. I am confident of your ability to guide us through this session, and assure you of my delegation's full support as you carry out that important task.

The Committee is convening this year in difficult times, as we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The international community is facing serious challenges in the field of security, disarmament and non-proliferation. These include the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the danger — in the context of the increasing threat of international terrorism — that such weapons will fall into the hands of terrorists, the proliferation of nuclear-related technology through underground networks and problems of compliance on the part of individual countries.

In this regard, it is extremely regrettable that the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was unable to produce a consensus document on substantive issues, and that the General Assembly summit outcome document reached no consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation. That will detract from our future efforts to make progress in the disarmament and non-proliferation field. The United Nations is now at a crossroads, and whether or not it is able to respond effectively to disarmament and non-proliferation challenges will depend upon the efforts of every Member State. We need to work together in the Committee to tackle such issues with a sense of urgency.

This Committee, which is tasked with deliberating on issues related to international security and disarmament, is expected to decide upon concrete measures and ways to adequately respond to such problems by drawing on the wisdom and mustering the political will of all Member States.

The task of the First Committee is also to encourage further progress in the area of international security and disarmament. To date, positive elements in the field of conventional weapons include the adoption of the Nairobi Action Plan at the first Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention, the conclusion

of negotiations on an international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons and the success of the second United Nations Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action. Japan, together with Colombia and South Africa, will submit a draft resolution on small arms and light weapons that reflects those outcomes, and we look forward to its adoption by consensus.

International efforts to prevent terrorism include the adoption of an amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the opening for signature last month of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Japan joins the representative of Thailand in calling upon all Member States to make every effort to ensure the early ratification of all related conventions.

Furthermore, it is of great significance that, at the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), held last month, 117 of the countries that have signed or ratified the Treaty agreed on a final declaration calling for the Treaty's early ratification, as well as highlighting the importance of maintaining a moratorium on nuclear testing. Japan would like to reiterate its call for all those countries that have not yet ratified the CTBT to do so as soon as possible so as to ensure the early entry into force of the Treaty.

A realistic and effective means of tackling the problems facing the international community today is the strengthening and universalization of existing regimes, as well as their full implementation. In order not to undermine the credibility of such regimes, consistency in medium- to long-term policies is of particular importance. In this regard, countries should heed the will of the international community and the voice of the public, rather than just pursue their own national interests. From that perspective, dialogue with civil society and collaboration with non-governmental organizations that have expertise in that field is invaluable, as is the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation education.

Japan considers international frameworks, such as the NPT, the CTBT, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreements and Additional Protocols, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, to be of the utmost importance as a basis for international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Concerning the NPT, the lack of an agreed substantive document at the most recent Review Conference must not erode the authority and credibility of the Treaty. Each and every State party should therefore steadily implement concrete disarmament and non-proliferation measures.

Japan's fundamental position on nuclear disarmament attaches great importance to the realization, through the steady implementation of concrete measures, of a peaceful and safe world free from nuclear weapons. This practical and incremental approach towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons has been reflected in our resolutions on nuclear disarmament, submitted annually to the General Assembly since 1994.

Japan will submit a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament again this year. Given that this year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the atomic bombings, as well as of the establishment of the United Nations, we have decided to review and restructure our previous draft resolutions, avoiding repetition, so as to create one concise and strong draft resolution. The title of the draft resolution now reads, "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons".

Japan hopes that all countries, including the nuclear-weapon States, regardless of any differences in position, will unite and support our nuclear disarmament draft resolution.

Every year, various nuclear disarmament resolutions are submitted to the General Assembly. While those resolutions may differ in their approach to nuclear disarmament, they all share the common goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Strong momentum would be created if all Member States were to solidify their efforts to promote the common goal of nuclear disarmament.

We welcome the active exchange of views that has taken place in recent years on the reform of the First Committee. Strengthening the functioning of the First Committee is an urgent task. Such a discussion should take into account the work of other disarmament machinery such as the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, which are currently stagnating, and that discussion should be seen in the broader context of renewing the United Nations as a whole.

We welcome last year's consensus adoption of a resolution on improving the effectiveness of the

methods of work of the First Committee (resolution 59/95), and we welcome the efforts of the Chair and Member States towards its implementation. We look forward to a useful exchange of views again this year on the subject, and Japan, for its part, will actively participate in the discussion.

Mr. Yam (Singapore): Please allow me to join other speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and in extending appreciation to the former Chairman, Mr. Luis Alfonso de Alba, for his good work during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

My delegation would like to express our outrage at the bombings in Bali on the night of 1 October 2005 and to extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims. Singapore condemns that cruel and senseless act. We express our sympathy and solidarity with the Government and the people of Indonesia and with the countries whose nationals were also victims of that barbaric crime.

The statements that we have heard over the past few days reflect the shared concern at the lack of progress in the areas of international disarmament and non-proliferation. Terms such as "lethargy", "paralysis" and "overcast atmosphere" have been used to describe the current situation. The Conference on Disarmament did not achieve consensus on the way ahead. The 2005 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty failed to produce any substantive result. And the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains far beyond the grasp of the international community almost 10 years after its adoption. Significantly, perhaps what is most indicative of how little we have managed to agree on is the omission of any mention of disarmament or non-proliferation in the 2005 world summit outcome document (resolution 60/1).

My delegation is disappointed at the lack of results on those deeply critical issues. As Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba eloquently said earlier this week, a valuable opportunity has been lost. That lost opportunity is especially regretful in the context of the urgent security threats that we face today. It is starkly clear that our collective effort of international diplomacy to address disarmament and non-proliferation is in danger of being outpaced, first, by the unrelenting march of science and technology in the creation of more sophisticated and destructive weaponry; and secondly, by the extremism of terrorists, who have no qualms about devising new, more lethal means of inflicting devastation on innocent civilians. Since the start of the new millennium, the human tragedies that have occurred in New York, Bali, Riyadh and London testify to the indiscriminate, global reach of terrorism. If terrorists lay their hands on nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, the consequences will be devastating.

In the light of those new and evolving threats, there is great urgency for the international community to act in concert in the field of international peace and security. No country can hope to be spared those threats, nor can they hope to counter those threats alone, without cooperating with the larger community.

While we cannot expect to change the somewhat strained international climate overnight, Singapore believes that there are actions we can take now to preserve and build international confidence in order to advance the cause of international disarmament and non-proliferation.

First, we need to reaffirm our collective commitment to preserving the sanctity of international agreements. The credibility of international organizations and agreements is a paramount ingredient in creating trust among Member States. In that regard, Singapore urges Iran to heed the call of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to return to the process of dialogue to resolve outstanding matters, within the framework of the resolution adopted by the Board on 24 September 2005.

Secondly, we must collectively recognize the need to pursue progress concurrently on the two fronts of disarmament and non-proliferation. Our approach must evolve from a vision of the two issues as competing priorities to one that recognizes them as mutually reinforcing thrusts. To echo the words of Ambassador Sergio Duarte at the 2005 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, there is no possibility of success if each group clings to its own narrow perceptions. In that regard, Singapore appeals to all parties to adopt a flexible position for resolving their differences so that real progress can be made.

Singapore is highly sensitive to the dangers of proliferation, perhaps more so than other countries because of our size, openness and vulnerability. Nevertheless, the discovery in February 2004 of a

sophisticated and clandestine nuclear procurement network is surely reason enough for us all to enhance international cooperation to counter proliferation. For its part, Singapore has consistently supported multilateral non-proliferation regimes such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We believe that they are important instruments in the international effort to fight the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Singapore also supports the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which, inter alia, calls on Member States to enhance domestic controls and step up cooperation against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. While legally binding multilateralism should be the basis of the global non-proliferation regime, other multi-country initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), are important elements that fill the gaps in our efforts. I am pleased to note the successful completion of a recent PSI maritime interdiction exercise, hosted by Singapore in August, with the participation of 13 other countries. I am also pleased to note that in September, Singapore joined more than 100 countries in becoming a signatory to an Additional Protocol to the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

The United Nations has a vital role to play in leading a multipronged approach to resolving the series of security issues that now faces the international community: terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation and the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. As the only organization with a global mandate, the United Nations is best equipped to revive international dialogue, rebuild international trust and take effective steps to further peace and security in the world.

As a United Nations Member State committed to the pursuit of international disarmament and non-proliferation, Singapore commends the noble effort that Norway and six other countries have undertaken to help us find a way forward.

Finally, my delegation wishes to express our hope and confidence that the Committee will be able to work forward in a purposeful manner, under your able leadership, Mr. Chairman. We assure you of our fullest cooperation and support.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): My delegation wishes to extend our congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on the assumption of your posts. We also want to pay tribute to the Chairman at the fifty-ninth session, Ambassador De Alba of Mexico, whose sterling work assisted us in improving the efficiency of the Committee. We should continue to build on his efforts.

Jamaica associates itself with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community. We support their statements, and we only wish to add a few additional remarks.

The past year was particularly challenging for achieving the objectives of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. It had been hoped that the opportunity provided by the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations would generate the momentum necessary for the realization of previously agreed commitments. That, unfortunately, has not been the case.

At the same time, there is increased anxiety about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the possibility that those weapons could end up in the hands of terrorists and other persons. There is a general feeling of unease and the world now seems even more insecure.

Jamaica, like other delegations, was disappointed that the outcome document did not provide guidelines relevant to advancing the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation. We were able to find agreement on other matters, such as terrorism, human rights and even management reform of the Secretariat; yet, on matters of immense consequence to the very survival and existence of all mankind, there was silence. That, it should be pointed out, was in spite of the fact that disarmament and the regulation of armaments constitute an important obligation under the Charter.

The current state of events, while disappointing, should not really be a surprise, as inaction on disarmament issues seems to be the order of the day, as we have seen from the failure of the seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) earlier this year, the very dismal track-record of the Conference on Disarmament, and the continuing

inability of the Disarmament Commission to function by even agreeing on its agenda. It seems that we need to take some action to make some forward progress.

At the same time, we would want to commend the Government of Mexico for the successful convening of the First Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, which was held from 26 to 28 April. It is hoped that we can build on the successful outcome of that Conference in order to move closer to our goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Despite all the challenges, Jamaica remains committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament, and believes that the great military Powers should take the lead. We deem it critical that there be fulfilment by the nuclear-weapon States of their obligations under multilateral disarmament instruments, in particular article VI of the NPT. There should be adherence to previously agreed commitments on disarmament and non-proliferation, including those of the sixth Review Conference of the NPT and of the 13 practical steps that were agreed on. Unless commitments are fully respected and honoured, there will be no progress towards reaching non-proliferation goals. It should be clear to us that the strengthening of confidence in international security will be dependent on the absence of discriminatory or selective application of the norms and regulations governing arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Jamaica agrees that it is now time for fresh approaches to be found so as to effect real change in the disarmament agenda. We can broadly support the thinking of the President of the General Assembly on an approach based on creativity and new ideas. Such moves for change, however, should not be at the expense of previously agreed instruments and need to be based on a firm commitment to multilateralism, underpinned by strong political will.

This year's session of the First Committee should provide the opportunity for a discussion on how to reactivate disarmament. We are therefore inclined to support the proposal put forward by the representative of Pakistan yesterday for you, Sir, to conduct a number of informal consultations on ways to move forward on the international disarmament agenda.

We are, however, convinced that the convening of the fourth special session on disarmament would be the best means by which to have a thorough review and discussion on all matters relevant to disarmament and non-proliferation. Such a session is long overdue and would allow for a review of the disarmament machinery and focus on the current challenges to international security. It is preferable that discussion on such matters be held in a universal intergovernmental forum so that we can have a comprehensive approach to all matters relating to disarmament and non-proliferation, and include the participation of all States.

We note there has been some modest progress in the implementation of the United Nations 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That was reflected in reports submitted by States during the Second Biennial Meeting held in July.

But much more needs to be done. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons continues to escalate and to undermine the stability and the social and economic fabric of many developing countries. We were therefore profoundly disappointed that the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group established to elaborate an international instrument on the marking and tracing of illicit weapons did not produce an instrument which would be legally binding. We have no assurance that it is to be politically binding. In the light of experience at the failure of political will to honour disarmament instruments, we have little confidence that implementation will be effectively pursued by the producer countries. We therefore have to register our strong reservations on the recommendation that the Working Group has placed before us.

The international community needs to make a firmer commitment to dealing effectively with the proliferation of that category of weapons, which seriously affects our national security.

In conclusion, Jamaica welcomes the implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan on landmines adopted last year. As a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Jamaica is committed to the full implementation of the treaty. We commend the steps taken in order to curb the use of anti-personnel landmines and congratulate those countries which are seeking to actively comply with its provisions.

Mr. Hemayetuddin (Bangladesh): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, and the Bureau on your well-deserved election. Your wisdom and dynamic leadership, I am confident, will lead the work of the Committee to fruition.

My delegation also expresses its gratitude to Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba of Mexico for his skilful conduct of the Committee's work at the fifty-ninth session. Appreciation is also owed to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his thoughtful statement.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As members might agree, the work of the First Committee at this session has assumed unprecedented significance for many reasons. 2005 has been a year of successive failures and disappointment as far as our disarmament and non-proliferation agenda is concerned. We need stronger political will and more innovative thinking to arrest that dangerous slide.

It was a huge disappointment for Bangladesh that the 2005 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to draw a chart for our future course of action in advancing our common agenda of disarmament and non-proliferation. We witnessed with much anguish how most of the time allocated to the Conference was taken up in procedural wrangling. That unfortunate event has now raised the inevitable question: Does failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference mean the weakening of our achievements in 1995 and 2000? We do not think so. We simply cannot turn away from our agreements of 1995 and 2000, adopted by consensus. That would be a substantial step backward and a legally untenable position.

In 2005, the Disarmament Commission once again failed to agree on an agenda for its substantive session. That was also the case with the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament, which could not agree on a programme of work, thus blocking its substantive work.

As if that were not enough, the High-level Plenary Meeting of 14 to 16 September 2005 also failed on this very vital front in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is deeply regrettable that, after months of intense negotiations, we could not agree on a common disarmament and non-proliferation agenda or even simply reaffirm our past commitments.

Notwithstanding our failures, it is important that we look forward rather than just wonder how we reached this point. We believe that a lack of political will has brought us to this situation of possibly dangerous deadlock.

This regrettable trend in our negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation underlines the urgent need for us to engage in meaningful multilateralism if we are to make real progress. We agree with the Secretary-General that the instruments of multilateralism must be revitalized if they are to continue contributing to international peace and security. Bangladesh has always been a strong advocate of asserting the supremacy of the rule of law and multilateralism in all areas of international relations, especially in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe that the clearly harmful trend of unilateralism and the wilful interpretation of multilateral instruments and international law by some must be reversed.

Existing and emerging threats have heightened international concern about weapons of mass destruction. The absence of firm commitment to disarmament, non-compliance with nuclear non-proliferation commitments, the existence of a clandestine nuclear network and the danger of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists are all ominous signs of impending dangers. We must resume the stalled multilateral negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation without further delay if we are really serious about effectively addressing those threats.

Like many other countries, Bangladesh considers the Conference on Disarmament to be the sole multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament. We are disappointed that the substantive work of that important body has been stalled for years. We call upon all to resume substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament, in line with the unanimous conclusion of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that States have an obligation to pursue in good faith, and to bring to a conclusion, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

Bangladesh reiterates its call for the convening of an international conference to reach agreement on a phased programme for the elimination of all nuclear weapons, for the prohibition of their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, and use or threat of use, and for their destruction. We also urge the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention. Bangladesh continues to believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons. The major players in that field need to demonstrate their political will to move forward and emerge from the miserable situation in which we now find ourselves.

It is obvious that the nuclear-weapon States have failed to demonstrate any visible progress towards accomplishing the elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament. We wish to recall that the greatest threat to humanity comes from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or the threat of their use. We must underscore the need to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons to save the world from that menace forever. Bangladesh demands reaffirmation of the negative security assurances provided by the nuclear-weapon States.

We are concerned at the fact that the nuclear-weapon States are giving existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons greater precision capability and are developing new types of weaponry. Both developments have serious and adverse destabilizing consequences. We wish to recall that giving more precision capability to the existing stockpiles and developing new types of nuclear weapons are in contravention of the assurances provided by the nuclear-weapon States at the time of the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT would have prevented the improvement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons.

We believe that the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their acquisition by State and non-State actors are real possibilities. Giving nuclear weapons precision capability only makes those weapons more attractive to terrorists for acquisition and use, bringing havoc to us all. We cannot allow that to happen. Bangladesh reaffirms its firm conviction that the best guarantee against nuclear weapons proliferation continues to be their total elimination.

Bangladesh's record on disarmament and non-proliferation is, as all will agree, impeccable. We have consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. Bangladesh is the first Annex 2 State in South Asia to sign and ratify the CTBT. We are party to almost all disarmament-related treaties, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the CTBT, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Anti-personnel Mines Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention. We have also concluded a safeguards agreement with the IAEA and have signed and ratified the Additional Protocols. This provides tangible testimony to our unswerving commitment to the goal of nuclear weapon non-proliferation, disarmament and their eventual elimination.

Article IV of the NPT guarantees the inalienable rights of all States parties to the NPT to the development, research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. Also, article IV recognizes the right of all States parties to cooperate among themselves in the exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological knowledge and information for the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

However, we are concerned that undue restrictions on the export to developing non-nuclear-weapon countries of material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes continue to persist through measures incompatible with the Treaty's provisions. Those barriers must be removed. We are also disappointed that extraneous reasons are being used by some nuclear-weapon States to deny the right of non-nuclear States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology. Bangladesh calls upon all concerned to engage in constructive dialogue in order to implement the provisions of articles I, II and IV of the NPT in an environment of trust and confidence.

We wish to reaffirm the inviolability of peaceful nuclear activities. We consider that any attack or threat of attack against peaceful nuclear facilities poses a great danger to all. The threat of attack buttresses the perceived need to defend. It will demonstrate the efficacy of weaponization. That is incontrovertible logic. We can deny that only at our great peril.

We are concerned at the continued development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military

technologies capable of being deployed in outer space. That has further eroded the international climate. Bangladesh reiterates its call for the resumption of work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Bangladesh greatly values regional approaches to nuclear disarmament. Building confidence through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones can contribute significantly to disarmament. We welcome all existing nuclear weapon free zones and call for the establishment of similar zones in South Asia, the Middle East and other parts of the world. The Kathmandu process needs to be followed to contribute to regional peace and security in Asia and the Pacific. In South Asia, India and Pakistan must relinquish their nuclear option and join the NPT. In the Middle East, Israel must do the same.

Armed conflicts and a deterioration of law and order have devastating effects on our societies and economies. In Bangladesh, an otherwise peaceful society, the unbridled flow of small arms and light weapons through our porous borders and their illicit trade have significantly frustrated Government efforts to improve the law and order situation. We therefore value the initiatives aimed at curbing the flow and illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. We believe that the issue of small arms and light weapons — the real weapons of mass destruction, which cause a higher death toll than that caused by the atomic bombs in Japan — must be placed in the overall perspective of peace and security. If we are to stop the self-perpetuating cycle of violence, we must focus on prevention, including by addressing the root causes of violence.

Although our preference has always been a legally binding document, we are encouraged by the recent agreement on the text of a politically binding international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. We look forward to its adoption at the current session of the General Assembly.

We wish to inform the United Nations membership, with a modicum of pride, that Bangladesh has destroyed all its stockpiles of landmines, in fulfilment of its commitment to the international instruments on landmines. We are concerned that a huge number of civilians, particularly women and children, still fall victim to anti-personnel landmines in conflict and post-conflict situations around the world. We call upon those States which have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We also urge that assistance be provided for landmine clearance operations and to rehabilitate the victims.

We are dismayed to learn that in 2004, estimated global military expenditures exceeded $1 trillion and that a continued increase was projected. This is an extremely alarming situation. We believe that most of these expenditures are the result of an unfortunate arms race that increasingly has a negative impact on our development agenda. There is no doubt that there exists a direct relationship between disarmament and development. We urge all countries, particularly the major military Powers, to curb their military expenditures and to devote part of the resources made available thereby to economic and social development in the developing countries. Such a move would greatly advance the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, by 2015.

It is imperative now that we act decisively and move in the right direction. Weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, chemical or biological, have brought no benefit to humanity. They have only caused the world immeasurable suffering and fear and have prevented development. Resources have been deployed to devise mechanisms to kill one another rather than to grow and prosper together in a peaceful world. Now is the time for us to work for a safer world, a world free of weapons of mass destruction, a world free of nuclear weapons. Such is the world we hope to create for ourselves and to bequeath to the generations yet to come.

Mr. Bouchaara (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Sir, let me congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and assure you of the full support of the delegation of Morocco as you carry out your task. Let me also, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, express our sincere gratitude and congratulations to Ambassador De Alba of Mexico for the excellent work he carried out during the preceding session. I also wish to take this opportunity to convey sincere condolences to the delegation of Indonesia following the terrorist attacks that took place several days ago in Bali. And finally, my delegation associates itself with the statements made by Indonesia

on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Last year, at the fifty-ninth session, the delegation of Morocco expressed the hope during the First Committee's general debate that the international community would be able to benefit from the important events slated for 2005 to provide new momentum towards disarmament and non-proliferation. Unfortunately, a historic opportunity to reinvigorate the multilateral disarmament system has been lost. The lack of any reference to disarmament in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting (resolution 60/1) is symptomatic of the inability of the international community to reach a common perception of the major challenges to be met in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament, and with respect to collective solutions that we need to identify. This lack of a shared vision that would marshal strong international support for actions to be undertaken should be, for all Member States, an additional reason to make the collective effort that the international community is entitled to expect from us.

Despite successive setbacks this year, the Kingdom of Morocco continues to believe that it is in the interest of everyone to work to promote revitalization of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation system. This would entail strengthening the international existing instruments, specifically the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), whose relevance needs to be reiterated and supported. This would also require giving all necessary attention to new challenges, specifically to the risks of terrorist groups using weapons of mass destruction (WMD). And this also, lastly, calls for special effort to work to resolve regional disputes. In the Middle East we would again remind the Committee of the importance of establishing a WMD-free zone and the need for Israel, the only State in the region which has not yet done so, to accede to the NPT.

In addition, peace and security in the Mediterranean region necessarily would entail reducing inequalities between the North and South shores to promote the emergence of shared prosperity and sustainable development. This, finally, would involve constructing a Maghreb united and in solidarity, a goal to which my country is deeply committed.

The considerable ravages caused by the trafficking in small arms and light weapons, specifically on the African continent, fully justify the importance accorded to this issue by the United Nations. We commend the adoption last June by the working group that was established on this subject by the General Assembly, of a draft international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons.

Indeed, Morocco supported a legally binding instrument; nevertheless, we believe that the draft instrument adopted, although only of a political nature, constitutes a useful step in the right direction. We welcome in advance the support that the General Assembly will give to the draft instrument by adopting it. That would be clear testimony of solidarity for all countries suffering from the consequences of trafficking in small arms and light weapons, specifically in Africa.

Throughout this past year the Kingdom of Morocco has spared no effort to meet all of its international commitments in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. As such, the Government Council of the Kingdom of Morocco adopted on 14 July 2005 the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, thereby opening the door to the ratification of that document. Similarly, we have submitted our national report under the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and have also made our national statement as a State that has subscribed to the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missiles.

The First Committee has shown the way by adopting measures last year to enhance its working methods. What we need to do now is to demonstrate our political will to move forward in terms of implementation of the commitments taken in the past. Otherwise, the repetitive nature of our resolutions will only intensify and our own credibility will be damaged. The raison d'être of the First Committee is not only to permit exchanges of views among members, but also, and above all, to achieve political goals to enable us to contribute to multilateral disarmament and to strengthening international security.

Mr. Lara-Peña (Dominican Republic) (spoke in Spanish): This being our first statement in this session's general debate in the First Committee, we express our satisfaction, Sir, at your election to the

Democratic Security, which is aimed at curbing crime in local neighbourhoods through sensitizing police work to the needs of our citizens, thereby promoting citizens' integration into fighting the plague which crime represents.

Apart from crime, however, there are new threats States must nowadays come to grips with, threats more subtle than those of the naked cruelty and senselessness of terrorism. Those threats bring in their wake hunger and grinding poverty and the remedies required cannot be individually administered.

In this respect, we want to draw attention to a point that, while not new, takes on extremely dangerous dimensions in this world of ours here at the beginning of the twenty-first century. We are referring to the crisis in energy resources. As the President of the Dominican Republic put it at the recent High-level Plenary Meeting here at the United Nations, "to guarantee political stability, good governance and international peace and security ... we call upon the world community to place the current energy crisis as a top priority on the international agenda" (*A/60/PV.7, p. 16*). In that vein, I would venture to reaffirm in this room the idea our President put forward at the summit: that of convening a major gathering of world leaders to present alternative solutions to this serious problem, which may well be described as the ultimate blow to the prosperity of developing nations. The enormous pressure of fuel price volatility on our emerging economies is becoming a brake and a factor of distortion for any development plan.

There are still other variables related to energy sources. However, our concern about coming up with a feasible and lasting solution to the energy crisis initiated by the energy needs of our countries must not make us lose sight of the dangers that attend our resorting to certain energy sources and the need to circumvent potential dangers. In this sense, the use of nuclear energy is a controversial issue at international forums and in terms of the relations among States. Various conventions regulate its use and one of them concerns the effects on individuals and surrounding regions of transport of radioactive wastes through particularly sensitive areas.

The economy of the Dominican Republic depends in large measure on the tourist industry. For the progress of that sector vital to our development, we need clean water and a pristine environment, which is

why any radioactive damage done to our coasts could spell a major setback — all this in the midst of a critical situation our country is already going through — a situation we share with the countries in our region. We trust that the international community will show due vigilance and guarantee the implementation of safety and security measures regarding the transport of radioactive material and hazardous wastes as established by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the International Maritime Organization, along with the adoption of norms to complement those measures.

My delegation is especially interested in aspects relating to guarantees dealing with pollution of the maritime environment, the exchange of information on sea routes and the communication of contingency plans in the event of shipwreck, as well as a commitment to recover materials in the event of dumping, the decontamination of areas thus affected, and the establishment of machinery and effective norms to assign liability in the event of damage. As has been our country's traditional position, we will continue contributing to the success of the work of this Committee, certain that in this way we will, to a certain extent, be laying the groundwork for a lasting peace.

Mr. Ikouebe (Congo) *(spoke in French)*: On behalf of my delegation, let me sincerely congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election and express our gratitude to your predecessor for his excellent work during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. My delegation, finally, would like to associate itself with the statements made here by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

The work of the First Committee is taking place at a time when many issues are before us with respect to strengthening disarmament instruments and with respect to nuclear non-proliferation and ending the arms race. This is in an international context where the goals of disarmament in general are far from being achieved, while the challenges to be met are increasing in number, particularly with respect to the rise of international terrorism.

We thus meet in a climate of increased concern, while we seem daily to be moving farther and farther from the commitments made at the Millennium Summit. We saw this recently at the High-level Plenary Meeting, during which States failed to reach agreement on how to advance the debate on disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

How did we reach this point? My delegation feels that this concern must be at the very heart of our current discussions if we really want to end the existing stalemate.

While the lack of consensus on disarmament was manifest at the recent summit, this lack of consensus is in no way surprising. It is in keeping with a series of earlier setbacks. other meetings on disarmament issues had previously demonstrated a dangerous trend towards the lack of consensus that denied to the summit a solemn commitment on this vital issue.

In its annual report to the General Assembly (A/60/27), the Conference on Disarmament, the international community's sole multilateral body for disarmament negotiations, reports that it concluded its 2005 session again without agreeing on a programme of work. It has neither established nor re-established mechanisms for any specific agenda items.

For the past nine years, the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to reach agreement on a programme of work or undertake any substantive work. As we all know, the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held at New York from 2 to 27 May, ended without a substantive agreement, adopting a document concerning only procedural questions. The failure of the seventh NPT Review Conference could erode the credibility of the non-proliferation regime in a world where the nuclear danger still seems to be considerable.

The regrets and frustration voiced by various parties over the setback was not enough to make us commit to a process of fruitful negotiation during discussions on the contents of the outcome document at the summit. Instead, our national interests took precedent over the need for a collective spirit towards a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

It is clear from the outcome of the summit that no agreement was reached on nuclear disarmament, security safeguards, safeguard mechanisms and on the issue of the Middle East. Nor was there an agreement on implementation of the provisions of the Treaty concerning the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The impact of our failures is that we do not send a clear and strong message to terrorists. If we want to send such a message, we must begin by demonstrating to them our unwavering determination. Here, we can only reiterate the appeal made to States in annex 2 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to ratify the Treaty.

We welcome the statement made by the People's Republic of China, one of the States listed in annex 2, that it will ratify the CTBT. We are certain that the Treaty is an effective disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation measure and that its prompt entry into force will make a considerable contribution to international peace and security. Likewise, we support the concept of collective security based on mutual trust, cooperation, shared benefits, equality and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons on All Its Aspects, held in New York from 11 to 15 July, provided an opportunity for Member States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to review progress made at the national, regional and international levels since the adoption of the 2001 Programme of Action.

Unfortunately, it was impossible to conclude the talks that were begun in June 2004 with the adoption of a legally binding instrument enabling States to identify small arms and light weapons and monitor illegal trafficking. It is regrettable that the proposed draft instrument is political in nature and that it makes no reference to ammunition.

As the Secretary-General said in his report on the work of the Organization (A/60/1), this agreement is a new and encouraging step toward implementing the political commitments made within the framework of the programme of action. However, he called for more resolve in implementation and in the ongoing concerted efforts with respect to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

We are still far from having achieved our goals. Yet, it is the responsibility of all of us to history and future generations to promote and strengthen the various multilateral disarmament instruments in order to reduce the threat that conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction pose to humankind.

I wish to take this opportunity to raise the concerns of the Congo and other States members of the Economic Community of Central African States with respect to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons that were expressed at the twenty-second Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held at Brazzaville from 14 to 18 March 2005.

The review of implementation of the Programme of Action made at the Meeting shows that efforts made by States in the region continue to be weak and could be undermined by difficulties related to porous borders, lack of equipment and lack of precise data and information on the nature and quantity of arms in circulation.

I wish to renew the appeal made at the Meeting that the international community provide the necessary support for effectively combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. These observations and this appeal apply also to the entire Great Lakes region, which needs to be seen as a specific area for development and reconstruction, requiring specially allocated funds. The international community will thus have greatly contributed to conditions conducive to consolidating peace, security and stability in an area that has suffered far too long from armed conflict.

Mr. Gharbi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): The Permanent Representative of Tunisia had a last-minute obligation and has asked me to speak on his behalf.

On behalf of my delegation, I most warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I assure you of the support and cooperation of my delegation as you carry out your task to assure a successful outcome of our work.

Tunisia has always believed that the arms race can be pursued only to the detriment of the most basic needs of civilian populations. Tunisia believes that priority must be given to reorienting the bulk of the resources dedicated to military ends to development activities and economic growth.

At the September summit, the international community again missed an opportunity to establish precise goals with a view to relaunching the process of disarmament and non-proliferation, which has clearly slowed during the past few years. In addition to the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons (NPT) in May of this year, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has still not entered into force nine years after its adoption. Similarly, the Conference on Disarmament — the only multilateral disarmament negotiating body — continues to face problems with regard to its programme of work. Furthermore, the Disarmament Commission is still having trouble establishing a definitive and firm agenda for its future work. Problems thus persist, impeding the process. My delegation continues to believe that the multilateral solutions on which agreements have been reached in accordance with the Charter provide the best way of resolving, in a lasting manner, the many issues relating to disarmament and international security.

Any assessment of the situation with regard to nuclear disarmament over the past 30 years would conclude that there has been a lack of meaningful progress. We are still a long way from achieving the goals set out in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) with regard to nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament under effective international control. In this context, we reiterate the appeals that have been made for the full implementation of the commitments entered into by the nuclear-weapon States during the 2000 NPT Review Conference so as to bring about the total elimination of their nuclear stockpiles.

Pending the elimination of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, non-nuclear-weapon States are entitled to effective security guarantees against the threat or use of such weapons. We also believe that the time has come to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament with a view to identifying ways and means to re-launch the disarmament process at the multilateral level. In this context, it is our hope that the Open-ended Working Group dealing with that issue will be able to make positive proposals to that effect.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region concerned, as well as the establishment of zones free from all weapons of mass destruction, is an important way of promoting non-proliferation and disarmament at both the regional and international levels. That is part and parcel of the strengthening of the NPT regime.

In this context, the Middle East continues to be one of the areas of greatest concern because of Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT and to place all of its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency, despite the many appeals from other States in the region and the many General Assembly resolutions relating to the matter. In that respect, we call on the international community, in particular the Powers that have influence, to take urgent practical measures to establish such a zone.

We are aware of the enormous importance of the Convention banning anti-personnel landmines and its beneficial effects for international peace and security. My country therefore promptly ratified the Convention and has completed the process of destroying its stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines. We hope that all States parties will take part in the process with a view to implementing the provisions of the Convention.

Similarly, we welcome the work accomplished this year by the Open-ended Working Group charged with negotiating an international draft instrument on the tracing of small arms and light weapons.

Tunisia is playing an active role in the many arenas of which it forms a part, first and foremost the Arab Maghreb Union, which for us represents a fundamental historic achievement and a strategic choice. My country has been contributing since the 1960s to the restoration and consolidation of peace in the world, particularly in Africa, through its involvement in various peacekeeping operations. Tunisia is also working steadfastly to ensure the process the success of the Barcelona process, which provides an important basis for cooperation and solidarity among countries on both sides of the Mediterranean. That process contributes to strengthening the partnership in the Mediterranean with respect to the economic and security challenges confronting the region.

My country will continue to play a role in promoting peace and disarmament. We wish the Committee every success in its work.

Mr. Erçin (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. My delegation will spare no effort in supporting your endeavours during the work of the Committee.

Turkey aligns itself with the statement made by the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union. I will elaborate briefly on some issues to which my country attaches particular importance.

I wish to start with the global security environment, which has changed dramatically in recent years. Today, non-State actors, terrorists and States that are not in compliance with non-proliferation and disarmament requirements, as well as delays in the fulfilment of nuclear disarmament engagements and obligations, challenge the delicate balance that the system of treaties has established over the past four decades. That balance should be preserved, and the United Nations should be able to respond to those challenges.

Nevertheless, as many speakers have pointed out, the United Nations family has failed to take concrete steps in the past year on the pressing issues of non-proliferation and disarmament. We were not able to bridge the gaps between the various positions on the draft disarmament portion of the World Summit Outcome.

Those setbacks should not discourage us. On the contrary, they should increase our resolve to work together in order to give new life and energy to the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Turkey will support all efforts to that end. In this context, we would like to place particular emphasis on the necessity of reinvigorating the work carried out within the Conference on Disarmament. That body bears the brunt of the effects of the international community's efforts in this field, and we should strive to keep it up to speed.

Arms control, non-proliferation and disarmamen are important elements of Turkey's national security policy. Turkey is a party to all international non-proliferation instruments and export-control regimes, and wishes to see the universalization and effective implementation of those instruments.

In addition, Turkey also supports Security Council 1540 (2004) and the Proliferation Security Initiative, which, in our opinion, complement the global efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Despite the failure of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which took place in May, Turkey believes that the NPT is still a unique and irreplaceable multilateral instrument, the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. One indispensable component of that regime is, without doubt, the verification authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That authority should be strengthened and the Model Additional Protocol should be adopted as the universal norm for verifying compliance with the NPT. That is especially important in view of the recent crisis that we faced within the IAEA.

As it is located in a region of particular concern with regard to global nuclear non-proliferation, Turkey also attaches great importance to the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and appeals once again, in particular to the remaining Annex II States that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Treaty.

In this context, I would also like to reiterate our support for the long-standing idea of creating a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Turkey encourages all efforts aimed at achieving a common regional understanding on this project with the participation of all parties concerned. That, inter alia, necessitates the wider adherence to and effective implementation in our region of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We urge all countries in our region which are not party to those instruments to become parties promptly.

The progressive increase in the range and accuracy of ballistic missiles make the proliferation threat all the more worrying. Turkey believes that the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation constitutes a practical step towards an internationally accepted legal framework in this field.

Conventional weapons proliferation also constitutes a serious concern for my country. The excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to peace and security, as well as to the socio-economic development of many countries. There is also a close relationship between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and terrorism. Turkey will continue to actively contribute to all efforts within the United Nations and other forums to foster international cooperation and the establishment of effective norms and rules with a view to combating and eradicating the

illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

Proliferation and unauthorized use of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) is also a matter of serious concern within the area of small arms and light weapons. Turkey strongly believes that the international community should act decisively to improve stockpile security and strengthen export controls in countries that import and manufacture MANPADS. In that regard, Turkey will again sponsor a draft resolution on MANPADS this year, and hopes that the Committee will adopt it by consensus.

Another worrying issue in the field of conventional weapons is the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. Turkey fully supports efforts to universalize and effectively implement the Ottawa Convention and to realize the vision of a world free from anti-personnel mines.

I would also like to note that Turkey became party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Additional Protocols I, II and IV in March 2005. In line with our obligations under Additional Protocol II, Turkey has submitted a report on its activities.

My intervention would not be complete without mentioning our support for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. That tool is, in our view, a very useful mechanism and a complement to our work in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to stress once again the importance Turkey attaches to general and complete disarmament and the continued support my country provides to all efforts in the field of sustaining international security through arms control and disarmament. While the task ahead of us is a difficult one, we stand ready to take an active part in all efforts towards that end.

Mr. Requeijo Gual (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba endorses the statement delivered last Monday by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I should like to begin by reaffirming the relevance and importance of the First Committee, particularly today when we are being mired down in a lengthy debate over what happened at the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation forums during the period we are discussing.

On 16 September the High-level Plenary Meeting concluded with the adoption of an outcome document (resolution 60/1) from which issues of vital importance to our peoples were omitted. Indeed, the fact that the majority of United Nations Member States were shut out of the final negotiations has been denounced. That discriminatory and in no way transparent procedure was also applied to the consideration of issues to be included in a section on disarmament and non-proliferation. The final product of that non-inclusive negotiation was disappointing and deplorable because the decision was made to eliminate the section from the final document, owing to the United States delegation's rejection of language on nuclear disarmament. That omission is particularly alarming if we bear in mind that, in our current unipolar world, military expenditures continue to grow, principally owing to a dizzying increase in the super-Power's military budget. That, in turn, makes all the more evident hegemony, unilateralism, interventionism — covert or overt — the insecurity of the weakest countries, as well as the intent to validate the doctrine of the preventive use of force. For those reasons it becomes ever more imperative to preserve multilateralism in international relations, based on a strict adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

It is simply unacceptable that there are a billion illiterates and 900 million people suffering from hunger in the world while annual military expenditures are already estimated to be rising to a trillion dollars. How much more progress could be made towards attaining the oft-touted but modest Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) if but a fraction of those colossal military expenditures were to go towards resolving the problems of underdevelopment and reducing the gap between the richest and the poorest countries?

Cuba continues to firmly advocate general and complete disarmament under strict international control. In particular, we call for the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. Cuba, together with the other countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, has always given top priority to nuclear disarmament — aware as we are of the danger that the mere existence of such weapons entails for all of humanity.

It is contradictory that certain States continue to pressure — indeed, force — others to focus the attention of the international community on horizontal non-proliferation rather than on nuclear disarmament, notwithstanding the fact that there are still tens of thousands of nuclear weapons jeopardizing the very existence of humankind. The question of proliferation in all its aspects must be resolved by political and diplomatic means, within the context of international law, including the United Nations Charter. The only secure and effective way to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is through their total elimination.

The First Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held in Mexico City in April, was an event of momentous significance. Cuba, one of the meeting's Vice-Presidents, was actively and constructively involved in both the preparations for and the deliberations at that major conference — including in the negotiations on the final declaration adopted. That involvement is another demonstration of the Cuban Government's firm commitment to multilateralism and its political determination to comply with all its obligations as a State party to both the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, and it shows that Cuba continues to take concrete steps towards that end.

In May, the seventh NPT Review Conference concluded without reaching agreement on substantive agenda items. That is, indeed, regrettable. During the debates and the negotiations held at the Conference it became evident that certain nuclear Powers still lacked the necessary political will to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons and to ban them permanently. As far as Cuba is concerned, the NPT is not an end in itself; it is but one more step on the path to achieving nuclear disarmament. Cuba firmly rejects once again the use of selectivity and double standards in applying the NPT, which we have seen yet again in recent weeks. In this context we reaffirm our well-known position with respect to the inalienable right of States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. By the same token, we emphasize that issues related to nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot continue being relegated to the back burner while front and centre treatment is accorded to horizontal non-proliferation. We can no longer delay the initiation of multilateral negotiations designed to achieve a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument, under which States not possessing nuclear weapons commit themselves not to use or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

As to conventional weapons, we continue to share the humanitarian concerns associated with the unbridled proliferation of small arms and light weapons as well as the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of anti-personnel mines. Moreover, we believe that this Committee should consider in depth and take concrete steps to prevent certain countries from continuing to develop increasingly sophisticated and deadly weapons which cause so-called collateral damage, a phrase used to obscure the innocent victims of such weaponry.

To the United Nations Programme of Action developed in 2001 is now added a political document agreed upon last June after intensive negotiations within the Open-ended Working Group on an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Regrettably, it proved impossible to arrive at a consensus with regard to the adoption of a legally binding text, essentially because of the opposition of the United States Government. Nevertheless, we recognize that that international instrument does represent something of a step forward.

Cuba shares the concern over the risk posed by the linkage between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. However, we cannot come to grips with this danger through the so-called Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a non-transparent and selective mechanism which limits itself to fighting horizontal proliferation, while ignoring vertical proliferation and disarmament. A number of elements or principles contained in the PSI are not in keeping with actual practice and would violate the basic principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and with principles recognized in international law. Under the PSI, action could be taken which runs counter to key provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. This kind of initiative erodes multilateralism because it weakens rather than contributes to international unity in dealing with the issue and with strengthening the roles of the United Nations and of international treaties in the disarmament and arms control arenas. We reiterate that the only way to guarantee that weapons of mass destruction do not

fall into the hands of terrorists is to prohibit and totally eliminate such weaponry, particularly nuclear weapons.

Mr. Bouchaara (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The phenomenon of terrorism, in any of its manifestations, must be combated without double standards. One cannot go around the world promoting a so-called crusade against international terrorism, including the kind that involves the use of weapons of mass destruction, while providing shelter and impunity to known abominable and self-confessed terrorists such as Luis Posada Carriles on the territory of the country that proclaims itself leader of that crusade.

On this very day, the Cuban people are commemorating the twenty-ninth anniversary of the horrible terrorist act perpetrated by this same Posada Carriles when he attacked a Cuban airliner in mid-flight and caused the death of 73 of its passengers. Cuba favours the creation and indeed the strengthening of an international coalition of all States to prevent the acquisition by terrorists of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, but such an effort must be carried out in the context of international cooperation under the aegis of the United Nations and in accordance with relevant international treaties.

Against that backdrop, however, we view with deep concern the fact that the Security Council continues to arrogate to itself prerogatives and functions it does not have, as was the case with the adoption of resolution 1540 (2004). This deals with an issue that should be and continues to be examined in the context of traditional multilateral disarmament machinery, where there are opportunities for all States to negotiate a legally binding instrument.

As the present year draws to a close, we also have not managed to reactivate the multilateral disarmament machinery; in fact, both the Conference on Disarmament as well as the Disarmament Commission are in a state of paralysis. Many of the resolutions adopted by the First Committee remain unimplemented, particularly those dealing with nuclear disarmament. We reiterate that to overcome this situation we urgently require renewed political support from the international community, particularly by those countries that call into question the priorities laid down during the General Assembly's first special session devoted to disarmament.

The General Assembly, including its First Committee, still lack the required machinery to follow up on the implementation of Assembly resolutions and decisions. The main difficulty this Committee runs into has nothing to do with whether or not its working methods are effective but, rather, with political factors, particularly the lack of political will on the part of certain powerful States, particularly the military super-Power, with respect to moving forward on issues that are of key relevance to international peace and security, including nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Hashem (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased, Sir, to convey to you my delegation's congratulations upon your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. I wish also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We wish you every success, Sir, as you apply your experience and wisdom to the deliberations of this Committee.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the world has aspired to translate into reality the agreements reached in the Millennium Declaration so that the inhabitants of the world can live free from fear of deprivation and danger and enjoy peace and security. Despite the five years that have passed since the adoption of the Declaration and the fact that that occasion coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, the situation is still marked by severe doubts due to the failure of the 2005 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, held last May, to agree on renewing international commitments made in 1995 and 2000.

The Kingdom of Bahrain believes in the need for international cooperation to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and has therefore ratified many conventions, including the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the NPT to which it acceded on 11 October 1988.

Initiatives on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones have met with success in certain parts of the world due to the belief on the part of some States in the need to establish peace and stability in these regions. This is a positive step towards the creation of a world free from WMDs. It is very urgent that the Middle East region, including the Arab Gulf, become a WMD-free zone. Our peoples in this region aspire to this. Yet Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT or to subject its nuclear facilities to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards stands in the way of that objective.

That is the basis of the international community's important responsibility to apply pressure on Israel to ensure that it abides by the relevant international resolutions.

It is regrettable that some nuclear-weapon States are hampering the work of the Conference on Disarmament. All difficulties and obstacles standing in the way of the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament should be eliminated. To that end, objective and pragmatic negotiations should be held in order to achieve the goals of the Conference on Disarmament and to establish a competent ad hoc committee within the Conference to deal with issues of nuclear disarmament.

In that context, the Kingdom of Bahrain supports the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which declared that all States are obligated to pursue in good faith negotiations leading to complete nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Vigorous initiatives to achieve nuclear non-proliferation will help curb the spread of nuclear weapons. The most recent such initiative was Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In conformity with that resolution, my Government has pledged to submit to the Council a national report on the issue of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone and mainstay of the non-proliferation regime, in spite of the obstacles posed by the non-accession of some States and the withdrawal or the threat of withdrawal by others. That situation gives the international community cause for concern about the possibility of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. Humankind continues to harbour the hope of living in a climate of widespread optimism, in which it can create an international society characterized by security, stability and peaceful coexistence among all States.

Mr. Kaludjerović (Serbia and Montenegro): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate the Chairman on his election to lead the deliberations of the First Committee. His experience and skill will no doubt lead us to the successful conclusion of the Committee's deliberations at the current session. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Serbia and Montenegro aligns itself with the statement made by the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union. At this point, I would like to make some additional remarks to which my country attaches particular importance.

Despite awareness of the need for any reform of the United Nations system to include reforms in the field of disarmament, it should be noted that there are persisting divisions among States on the priorities and the major challenges to international peace and security. Those divisions, in turn, affect agreement on the appropriate place and role of the United Nations in disarmament matters in the present day. The recently concluded High-level Plenary Meeting no doubt made some positive breakthroughs in the field of peace and security. However, we concur with the Secretary-General's assessment that it is a considerable disappointment that the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation was not mentioned in the outcome document. We expect that the present session will take concrete steps to overcome differences in this area, and thereby fully justify the concept of multilateralism.

The significance of the United Nations disarmament framework for peace and security in the world has rarely been as much at the centre of attention as it is now, as a result, in particular, of the growing threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their possible acquisition by terrorists. The linkages between nuclear proliferation, new forms of terrorism and transnational criminal networks constitute a real threat to international peace and security and require a collective response by the international community.

Serbia and Montenegro is truly committed to making its full contribution to all regional and global initiatives related to the fight against terrorism. Last month, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, adding it to the 12 anti-terrorism conventions it has already ratified. It is of utmost significance that in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, heads of State and Government "strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes" (*resolution 60/1, para. 81*), and we support the Secretary-General's identification of elements of a counter-terrorism strategy.

We are particularly concerned by another problem that affects stability in our region: the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and its direct connection to organized crime and terrorism. That problem is particularly acute in the territory of Serbia's autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija, which is temporarily administered by the United Nations. We are of the view that, to resolve that problem, we need to ensure full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, in particular by strengthening export controls and regional and international cooperation.

We therefore attach great importance to the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and we submit national information on the Programme's implementation on an annual basis. In cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, preparations are under way to establish a coordinating body to facilitate the implementation of the project of assistance to Serbia and Montenegro for strengthening the control of small arms and light weapons. The State Union law on foreign sales of arms, military equipment and dual-purpose goods was adopted in February 2005 and entered into force in March. The law on hand-held firearms, devices and ammunition testing is already in force. A law on arms and military equipment production is in preparation, and it is expected that a draft of the law will be submitted to the Union Parliament for adoption by the end of 2005.

In line with the binding provisions of the Ottawa Convention on Landmines, Serbia and Montenegro recently started implementation of the project to completely destroy its anti-personnel mine stockpiles. In August 2005, in cooperation with the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency and with Canada, the technical aspect of the destruction of anti-personnel mines was undertaken. We are convinced that by 2010, we shall attain the goal of proclaiming South-East Europe a zone free of anti-personnel mines.

At the same time, Serbia and Montenegro expects that the final document of the 2004 Nairobi Review Conference of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention will prove to be a necessary contribution to the international community's activities over the next five years in other important areas covered by the Convention such as humanitarian demining and the rehabilitation and the psychological and social reintegration of the victims of anti-personnel mines. In that context, States and civil society partners will convene next month in Zagreb, Croatia, to review progress in implementing the far-reaching Action Plan adopted at last year's Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World.

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Serbia and Montenegro supports efforts to achieve its full implementation. Unfortunately, the NPT Review Conference in May did not achieve substantive results, but exposed the weaknesses of the non-proliferation regime. That is why we have to redouble our efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as an important item on the international community's agenda.

In addition, we favour the promotion of a comprehensive nuclear weapons ban and the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, while permitting peaceful uses of nuclear energy under a strict International Atomic Energy Agency verification regime.

Serbia and Montenegro deposited its instruments of ratification for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in May 2004 and, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, supports all regional and multilateral meetings that stress the importance of the Treaty and which accelerate the ratification process. At the level of the State Union, a procedure has been initiated to devise a model to coordinate activities related to the implementation of the Treaty. We support the Final Declaration of the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York in September. Despite the difficulties of the ratification process, we must continue to promote the Treaty. To that end, it is crucial to adopt the Final Declaration, which will focus attention on the CTBT and the need to bring it into force. The Conference's Declaration is a qualitative step forward and provides a solid base for our future endeavours.

Serbia and Montenegro fully honours the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention and considers that, 30 years after the Convention's adoption, it is necessary to put in place a verification regime for the Convention, thereby enabling a uniform approach to the prevention of the proliferation of biological and toxin weapons. We are making efforts, in cooperation with individual European Union member States, to respond most effectively to the

challenges that may arise in the wake of the use of such weapons.

As a current member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Serbia and Montenegro supports all efforts to eliminate stockpiles of such weapons. As a sign of its commitment to the Convention, Serbia and Montenegro eliminated and destroyed all its stockpiles and relevant installations by the year 2004.

The Chairman returned to the Chair.

On 14 September 2005, Serbia and Montenegro aligned itself with the statement of the United Kingdom, Chair of the European Union, at the Madrid meeting at which Spain assumed the presidency of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). Although not a member of the MTCR, we voluntarily committed ourselves to complying with some MTCR documents.

As one of the five parties to the Agreement on Subregional Arms Control — article IV, annex 1 B of the Dayton Agreement — Serbia and Montenegro consistently implements the provisions of the Agreement, destroys surplus weapon stockpiles and directs its efforts towards fulfilling the requirements for full-fledged membership in Euro-Atlantic integration.

Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman, by expressing our support for your initiative to improve the efficiency of the work of the First Committee. We hope that during the current session of the Committee, we will be able to jointly find a way in which to improve its work so that it can respond more efficiently to the new challenges faced by the international community in the field of disarmament and international security.

Mrs. Núñez de Odremán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela congratulates you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We wish you every success in the work now under way.

Our delegation aligns itself the statements made by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Rio Group and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, we should like to highlight the position of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on certain aspects of disarmament and international security.

Our international actions in that area follow the guidelines of the foreign policy enshrined in the Constitution of 1999, the Organic Law of National Security and Defence and the 2001-2007 national economic and social development plan. Among these, we wish to highlight the promotion of a multipolar world, cooperation with developing countries, the fostering of confidence and security in the region and the implementation of a new comprehensive national and regional Latin American security regime characterized by a multidimensional approach and a concept of security that is non-offensive, cooperative and based on the economic, social, cultural and military development of peoples.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, committed to general and complete disarmament — an objective enshrined in its Constitution — has always supported measures taken by the international community within the framework of the United Nations to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons, the only way in which to avoid a nuclear war or accident. That is why we aspire to the objective of universalizing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We support the negotiations on a multilaterally and legally binding instrument whereby the nuclear Powers would fully commit themselves not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States and to act in accordance with article VI of the NPT by reducing their nuclear strength for the benefit of international peace and security. That is crucial in a world divided between States that possess nuclear weapons and those that do not and have, moreover, renounced the manufacture, acquisition and use of such weapons.

We believe that nuclear-weapon States must implement and comply with the 13 practical measures aimed at total and complete disarmament listed in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and halt programmes to develop new nuclear weapons. At the same time, we defend the inalienable right of countries to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Venezuela is making its contribution by installing two seismological stations on its territory as part of the International Monitoring System of the global verification regime established under that instrument.

However, we wish to express our deep concern at the disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives that have recently emerged outside the context of the United Nations, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, launched by the United States of America in 2003 and 2004, respectively. Likewise, we note with reservations the possibility that disarmament and non-proliferation issues will be transferred to the Security Council, a forum in which all States do not participate on an equal footing. An example of that trend was the Security Council's adoption, in April 2004, of resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Our country does not possess chemical weapons, but we have a major chemical and petrochemical industrial complex. That is why we have to submit annual declarations to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the importation, exploration and sale of certain chemical products considered as having dedicated uses under the Chemical Weapons Convention. In 2004 and 2005, we submitted to the Director-General of that organization declarations elaborated by the Ministry of Light Industries and Trade, and we wish to stress that the OPCW held its first inspection in Venezuela from 30 November to 3 December 2004. The verification activities took place at the El Tablazo petrochemical complex, and the inspectors' report was positive.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has also complied with the provisions of article 4 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. On 24 September 2003, we completed the destruction of 47,189 mines in the arsenals of the National Armed Forces, leaving only a small quantity for training exercises. On 4 July 2005, we submitted our annual report on the implementation of the Convention for the period May 2003-June 2005. Our country also contributes to the demining process in Central America by sending military experts to the Assistance Mission for Mine Clearance in Central America. In addition, we are pleased to report that on 19 April 2005, we deposited our instrument of accession to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, as well as to its Protocols I, II and III.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela does not possess ballistic missiles. However, in support of the international community's efforts to fill the legal vacuum in that area, we signed the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation at The Hague on 25 November 2002.

Our country believes that outer space must be declared a common heritage of humanity and that States must use it for peaceful purposes and share with humanity the benefits that can be obtained from it in areas such as environmental monitoring and improving telecommunications systems. We consider the geostationary orbit to be a limited natural resource subject to saturation and therefore that it must be used on the basis of the principle of rational and equitable access for all countries. In that connection, in December 2004 we established, on a temporary basis, the Venezuelan Presidential Commission for the Peaceful Use of Space in order to study, assess and formulate proposals enabling us to advise the national executive in decision-making in this area and in the creation of a standing body that would both guide and serve the State in the area of space.

Our country's view is that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons intensifies violent acts and, in many countries, hampers efforts aimed at resolving conflicts and problems, such as felonies in general, organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism. Therefore, our country has joined multilateral efforts to fight this problem.

We would like to highlight that in May of this year our National Assembly passed legislation adopting the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted on 31 May 2001 (resolution 55/255). We have been continuing to carry out measures under the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and we reaffirm our appreciation that this is indeed an excellent tool for tackling the problem.

At the regional level, we are complying with the norms set forth in the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, ratified in April 2005. Subregionally, we are

participating in the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) working group on firearms, along with associated States, and support the Andean Community's decision 552, setting out the Andean Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all Its Aspects.

At the domestic level, we adopted a disarmament law in 2002 and drew up legislation to protect and monitor arsenals and arms and munitions depots. In addition, the Venezuelan Criminal Code establishes five- to eight-year prison terms for those involved in marketing, importing and transporting illegal firearms. On the basis of this legislation, we have seized and decommissioned illegal weapons and publicly destroyed a total of approximately 43,000 tons of such armaments. The money received from selling this melted down material has gone into a foundation to help those injured by firearms.

Moreover, our country wishes to stress that ammunition is an inseparable element from the problem of the accumulation, transfer and illegal use of small arms and light weapons and therefore, measures taken to control the use of this kind of weaponry will be inadequate if they do not include the matter of ammunition.

As to dumping nuclear or radioactive waste and the grave consequences this has on the environment and human well being, Venezuela considers it fundamental that scientific and technological advances in the framework of disarmament and international security must be applied without prejudice to the environment and must contribute effectively to sustainable development. We support the transfer and exchange of the latest technical and scientific knowledge, not only as they relate to disarmament, but also as they can contribute to the fight against threats to security.

Finally, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to speak out again to confirm the clear-cut and daily threat now posed to international security by State terrorism. This is acknowledged conceptually within the United Nations through General Assembly resolution 39/159, adopted on 17 December 1984, which "Resolutely condemns policies and practices of terrorism in relations between States as a method of dealing with other States and peoples" (*para. 1*) and

> "Demands that all States take no actions aimed at military intervention and occupation, forcible change in or undermining of the socio-political system of States, destabilization and overthrow of their Governments and, in particular, initiate no military action to that end under any pretext whatsoever and cease forthwith any such action already in progress." (*para. 2*)

In dealing with this issue, we endorse what the representative of Cuba said, when he reminded us of the twenty-ninth anniversary of a terrorist act that shocked world public opinion — namely, the blowing-up of a Cubana de Aviación aircraft filled with young athletes who had departed from Venezuela. One of the perpetrators of this act, Luis Posada Carriles, a Venezuelan, is now residing in the United States. We hope that he will be extradited to Venezuela by the Government of the United States, as requested, so that he can be brought to justice to answer for the crime he committed 29 years ago.

Moreover, we want to alert the international community to the development of new doctrines that imply the threat or the use of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as the tactical use of such weapons under conditions of asymmetric conflict, for the purpose of repressing the popular uprising of peoples. Among these kinds of weapons worthy of our attention are recent developments relating to the Spanish flu virus that struck the world in 1918 and which is extraordinarily similar to the avian flu, the harmful effects of which could be modified for use by the military.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will continue to proclaim its commitment to peace and continue actively participating within the United Nations system and in the field of disarmament and international security to further the advent of a multipolar world that would bring about a safer, more peaceful, more prosperous world for our peoples.

Once again, Sir, we wish you success in the performance of your work at the helm of the First Committee, and we offer you our cooperation in doing so.

Mrs. Bonilla Galvão de Queiroz (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): May I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the present session of the General Assembly. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. We thank the delegation

of Argentina for its detailed statement on behalf of the Rio Group, which we fully endorse. However, my delegation deems it timely now to make additional observations about some points that we believe to be relevant.

Our meetings here in the First Committee are being held at a time that could not be more opportune, taking place as they do at the close of a year in which the problems in the arena of disarmament and non-proliferation have loomed large but where the expectations of the international community in that regard have not been fulfilled. We are witnessing a paralysis reflected in our work and in the impossibility of reaching consensus-based positions. Clear differences in terms of the concepts, priorities and approaches to security have cast a shadow on our basic aspiration, which is for the Assembly to fully and effectively use the powers conferred upon it under Article 11, paragraph 1, of the Charter — namely, with regard to the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of arms.

This year has witnessed more than one missed opportunity in our arena. The Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to adopt a substantive final document that would reflect our determination to control the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons and contain an unequivocal commitment to eliminating them. Once again, the Disarmament Commission was not able even to come up with a programme of work, which made it impossible for it to fill its mandate to deliberate on issues in the disarmament arena. And, to top it all, the subject of disarmament and international security was most conspicuously absent from the 2005 Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

These developments demonstrate the seriousness of the deadlock to which we have returned, and they should alert us to take action in this regard. We must propose ways to obtain better understanding and better cooperation in order to achieve better results in using the machinery available to us. Traditional and new kinds of security problems in the spheres of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation deserve equal attention. If we are to overcome these problems, new commitments, time and effort are required. It is our duty to dedicate ourselves to doing all that is necessary towards that end and the duty of the United Nations to provide the needed leadership.

A first step in the direction of realizing this new vision in the sphere of disarmament and non-proliferation is reflected in the document submitted by Norway on behalf of seven countries. It presents an across-the-board commitment and strikes a timely balance that may initiate a new dialogue promoting consensus in this regard.

The area of conventional weapons also deserves our full attention and concerted efforts. In the short term, we are looking to the first United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in July 2006. This will provide a new opportunity for us to work on a multilateral basis to reconcile our conflicting interests and focus on the problem of small arms and light weapons, which affects all of us.

Guatemala shares the view that the 2001 Programme of Action should be strengthened through the elaboration of effective international regulations on small arms and light weapons, ultimately aimed at promoting global security. In this respect, we share the near-unanimous dismay with regard to the limited scope of the recently concluded international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, the character and objectives of which do not respond to the needs of the countries that are hardest hit. We had hoped that that instrument would complement the commitments that we have already assumed under the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials. However, we look forward to being able to correct the situation at a later date. We must strive for better results on the basis of the other provisions in the Programme of Action, which, global in scope, have not yet been taken up.

Guatemala reaffirms its full support for the Ottawa Convention and the effective implementation of the far-reaching Nairobi Action Plan for the period 2004-2009. The forthcoming meeting, to be held in Zagreb, will provide an opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to preserving the humanitarian objectives of the Convention.

Guatemala shares the view of those who believe that there is a need to take a new approach to collective

security worldwide. Such an approach would enable us to overcome the difficulties that we have encountered when attempting to respond in an effective manner to old and new challenges to international security. One opportunity to review such a new approach will be provided by the meetings scheduled to be held in 2006 in preparation for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We trust that we will be able to derive maximum benefit from them.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean for the willingness that it so clearly demonstrated to help Guatemala to destroy many small arms and light weapons, as provided for in the 2001 Programme of Action.

Mr. Shein (Myanmar): I have the honour and privilege to take the floor on behalf of the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Myanmar.

At the outset, I wish to extend our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are delighted to see a distinguished diplomat from our region chairing this important Committee. We pay tribute also to the other members of the Bureau. I assure you of the fullest cooperation and support of the ASEAN delegations.

While we welcome the recently concluded High-level Plenary Meeting, we are disappointed that its outcome document failed to make any reference to disarmament and non-proliferation. We hope that the follow-up process on the outcome document will be held in a transparent, inclusive and open-ended manner.

The ASEAN countries reaffirm their support for the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice, in an advisory opinion of 8 July 1996, that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In this regard, the ASEAN countries continue to support, and intend to sponsor, the draft resolution, introduced every year by Malaysia, reaffirming that important ruling.

For a number of years, the ASEAN countries have sponsored the yearly draft resolutions, initiated by my country, calling upon the nuclear-weapon States to stop immediately the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. Those two draft resolutions form part of the ASEAN members' contributions to the cause of disarmament. This year, Malaysia and Myanmar, with the support of ASEAN and other sponsors, will re-introduce those draft resolutions. It is our ardent hope that the draft resolutions will enjoy broader support and increased sponsorship.

The ASEAN countries have consistently stressed the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). We reiterate our call to the nuclear-weapon States to make further efforts towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

We welcome the Final Declaration of the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York over the past two weeks, as well as measures to promote its early entry into force. We also reiterate the importance of the 12 concrete measures adopted at the previous Conference, held in Vienna in September 2003. As a region that was affected severely by the tsunami at the end of last year, we are delighted to see the initiative to make maximum use of the CTBT verification system for scientific and civil benefits, including for tsunami warning systems.

We regret that the 2005 NPT Review Conference, held in New York in May, did not achieve any substantive result. We urge all the parties concerned to demonstrate their political will to overcome their differences of view and work for concerted action on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We emphasize the importance of the full and non-selective implementation of the NPT in the areas of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and welcome the positive outcome of the 2000 Review Conference. The ASEAN countries also welcome the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all

States parties are committed under article VI of the NPT. We reiterate our view that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We therefore call once again for the full and effective implementation of the practical steps set out in the 2000 Final Document. In this connection, we reaffirm our conviction that there exists an urgent need for the nuclear-weapon States to take concrete measures to fulfil their obligations under the NPT.

We continue to believe that the concerns related to missile proliferation are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. We will work together with Member States to contribute to the United Nations endeavour to address the issue of missiles in all its aspects by identifying areas where consensus can be reached, including the establishment in 2007 of a panel of governmental experts on missiles.

We take note of the decision of the fifth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) that the States parties should meet annually in the lead-up to the sixth Review Conference in 2006, and that a meeting of experts should be held prior to each annual meeting.

We welcome the convening of the second annual meeting of the States parties in Geneva in December 2004, and urge them to continue to develop their own national capacities for response, investigation and mitigation with regard to infectious and deliberate diseases. We also welcome the convening, at Geneva in June 2005, of the third Meeting of Experts from States Parties, and commend their efforts to develop and implement the codes of conduct in order to prevent the deliberate or inadvertent misuse of science for purposes contrary to the BWC.

We also take note of the convening, at The Hague in November 2004, of the ninth Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and reaffirm our commitment to the provisions of the verification regime of the CWC. We further underline the urgency of resolving outstanding issues with a view to paving the way for the effective, full and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention.

The ASEAN countries note with appreciation the positive result of the second Biennial Meeting of States on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, held in New York in July 2005.

We welcome the intention to adopt, during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. We are of the view that the adoption of such an instrument is closely related to other disarmament efforts, in particular the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, which, we believe, should be given adequate attention by the international community.

We extend our deep appreciation to the Government of Mexico for hosting the Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held in Tlatelolco from 26 to 28 April 2005. We welcome the declaration adopted at that Conference, and we are convinced that the measures it contains can serve as a basis to strengthen the nuclear-weapon-free-zone regime and contribute to disarmament and non-proliferation processes, in particular, the evaluation of methods of cooperation for achieving the universal goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The ASEAN countries have successfully established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. The Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone entered into force on 27 March 1997. A protocol is annexed to the Treaty for accession by nuclear-weapon States. For the Treaty to become fully operational and effective, it is essential that nuclear-weapon States sign the Protocol at an early date. In that context, we welcome the readiness of China to sign the Protocol. The States Parties to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone welcome the Chinese gesture and reiterate their wish to see all five nuclear-weapon States sign the Protocol.

Mindful of rapidly unfolding events affecting international peace and security, we reaffirm our support for convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, with the participation of all United Nations Member States, as well as the need for such a session to review and assess implementation of the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and to reaffirm its principles and priorities.

The ASEAN countries continue to attach special importance to confidence-building efforts among the countries in the region. The ASEAN Regional Forum has steadfastly undertaken concrete measures to enhance regional security through various initiatives. The ASEAN Regional Forum also welcomed the enhancement of interfaith dialogues aimed at promoting mutual understanding and trust among the peoples in the region.

We are gratified that the Regional Forum has also recognized the purpose and principles of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in the South-East Asia, which can serve as a very important code of conduct governing inter-State relations in the region and for the promotion of cooperation, amity and friendship within South-East Asia and between ASEAN and other ASEAN Regional Forum participants. We also welcome the recent accession to the Treaty by Mongolia and New Zealand and Australia's declaration in July 2005 of its intent to accede to the Treaty. In that connection, we call on non-South-East Asian countries to consider acceding to the Treaty.

We reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. We are, however, disappointed and concerned by the continuing impasse in the Conference on Disarmament and note with regret that the Conference on Disarmament was still unable to reach an agreement on the programme of work at its 2005 session. It is our hope that the States concerned will demonstrate their commitment to the process of disarmament and demonstrate the political will to overcome that deadlock and reach an amicable solution in the near future.

We renew once again our commitment to multilateralism as an important means of pursuing and achieving our common objectives in the field of disarmament and our determination to further promote multilateralism in that respect.

It is now more urgent than ever for us, the international community, to strive for international peace and security and redouble our efforts to live up to our commitment to the goal of creating a nuclear-weapon-free world. We, the ASEAN countries, once again reaffirm our commitment to work cooperatively to achieve those goals as a matter of utmost priority.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/60/PV.7

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

First Committee
7th meeting
Friday, 7 October 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Choi ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: Before we start, I would like to share the good news that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its Director General, Mohamed ElBaradei, have received the Nobel Peace Prize for this year. I am sure that all members join me in congratulating them on receiving that prestigious award. I hope it will provide much-needed impetus to the cause of non-proliferation and disarmament.

This morning we have a total of 21 speakers on the list, including those delegations that were unable to speak yesterday. Therefore, I appeal to all delegations to abide by the agreed time limit and, if possible, even edit their statements so that we can conclude our general debate today and start the thematic discussions next Monday as planned. I appeal to members to abide by this work plan.

Agenda items 85 to 105 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Adekanye (Nigeria): I am speaking on behalf of Ambassador Aminu Wali, who is currently chairing another committee. My delegation warmly congratulates you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau. I also wish to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Abe, for his introductory statement.

This year has been marked, in large part, by a string of failures in the field of disarmament and arms control: the failure of Member States to agree on an agenda for the Disarmament Commission; the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to produce a meaningful outcome; the lingering inability to agree to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament; the perennial impasse in the Conference on Disarmament that prevents it from beginning substantive work; the continued failure by the required category of States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to enable it enter into force; and the ambivalence towards the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), among other failures. It is therefore hardly surprising that this discouraging trend played a major role in the failure to agree on a disarmament and non-proliferation section in the world summit outcome document (resolution 60/1).

The need to reverse this negative trend should be seen as one of the greatest challenges before the international community today, as the continued existence and proliferation of all types of weapons — conventional, as well as weapons of mass destruction — continue to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. States that possess such weapons — especially nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction — can no longer continue to pretend that their weapons pose no threat or a lesser threat to the global community.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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There is growing concern about the threat that the prevailing stalemate in multilateral disarmament negotiations poses to international peace and security. The time has come for Member States to stop looking at threats from nuclear or other types of weapons in terms of their narrowly defined self-interests. We all know that progress cannot be achieved on disarmament with such rigidly entrenched national viewpoints. It is common knowledge that the threats emanating from the excessive accumulation of weapons of mass destruction are harbingers of a spiraling arms race. We are witnessing this in the world today. We have reached a stage where we must balance the call for non-proliferation with the need for effective disarmament.

In the face of the general stalemate in the field of arms control and disarmament, my delegation believes that the time has come for all States to demonstrate the necessary political will to make progress in this area, especially in confronting the common challenge posed by the continued existence and proliferation of nuclear and other arms around the globe. I cannot fail to underscore the importance of confidence-building measures in assuaging the fears of States that feel threatened by other States' possession of weapons of mass destruction. Security guarantees firmly set out in binding documents remain, in our view, the best assurance that threatened States will not themselves acquire nuclear arms in self-defence. For its part, Nigeria will continue to abide by its commitments under various disarmament and arms control agreements to which it is a party. We will continue to work with other nations at the multilateral and other levels to promote disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects, with a view to achieving the overall objective of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

While taking note of the disappointing failures in the area of disarmament this year, we cannot fail to acknowledge that some modest progress has been made, including the adoption of a draft international agreement on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons. We wish, however, to reiterate the Nigerian position that such an instrument should be considered as only a stopgap measure, for we believe that it is only through a legally binding international instrument that the transfer of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors can be controlled and criminalized.

Similarly, the Nigerian delegation welcomes the initiative to convene the First Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held in Mexico from 26 to 28 April 2005. We reaffirm our commitment to the Declaration adopted at that Conference and express the belief that it will enhance cooperation among treaty zones and strengthen the nuclear-weapon-free zone regime, thus contributing to the disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation processes.

We also endorse the Final Declaration adopted at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York two weeks ago. The increase in the number of signatures of the Treaty to 176, and of ratifications to 125, demonstrates the resolve of the wider international community to achieve universalization of the Treaty. We therefore call upon the remaining 11 States whose ratification is mandatory for the Treaty to enter into force to ratify it as soon as possible so that it can enter into force without further delay.

This year, my delegation will, on behalf of the African Group, once again sponsor three draft resolutions, entitled respectively "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa", "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes" and "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty". We have always enjoyed the support of all Member States, shown through their adoption of the three draft resolutions by consensus. It is the hope of the Nigerian delegation that the draft resolutions will be similarly adopted when presented at the current session. We look forward to such support from Member States.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset, on behalf of my delegation, to join previous speakers in expressing to you, Sir, heartfelt congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. We believe that your experience as a seasoned diplomat and your country's resolute commitment to international peace and security will ensure the success of our deliberations. I also wish to congratulate your predecessor, who guided our work admirably during the fifty-ninth session.

Before turning to the matters before us, I should like to say that my country was horrified at the odious attack in Bali, which struck a friendly country so cruelly. I ask the delegation of Indonesia to accept the expression of our deep sympathy.

That bad news is tempered by the good news that the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to Mr. ElBaradei and to the International Atomic Energy Agency; we express to them our heartfelt congratulations.

As is well known, international peace and security have always — and particularly in recent years — been the chief concern in international life. The discussions in the First Committee demonstrate that clearly; many voices have already expressed the importance and gravity of this issue, on which the very survival of humanity depends. In fact, the representative of Indonesia has — on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, of which my country is a member — highlighted all our concerns. I associate myself with his statement, and I shall therefore limit myself to mentioning several problems of specific interest to my country, adding a general comment about some of the items on our agenda.

In the area of conventional weapons, Burkina Faso is striving to take an active part in subregional, African or international meetings. That attests to the importance we have always attached to the issue of international peace and security. Perhaps it is useful to recall that in recent years, the many conflicts shaking our subregion have focused a spotlight on the illicit trade in and circulation of small arms and light weapons, a grave phenomenon that has created enormous insecurity in our rural areas and cities, thus jeopardizing our development efforts.

That situation has led the Government of Burkina Faso to support the extension of the Bamako Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa, to invest in the quest for peace and to take an active part in activities and events organized within the framework of the United Nations. In that spirit, we cannot fail to welcome the progress made by the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We urge that efforts be redoubled with a view to the swift conclusion of such an instrument.

My country's fears are also great with regard to weapons of mass destruction. The mere mention of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is sufficient to evoke horror for us. That is why, together with other truly peace-loving nations, we call upon the international community to dedicate itself to preventing such catastrophes from ever happening again.

In the context of that hope, it is difficult to understand the procrastination and disputes that caused the impasse at the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). How can we fail to be concerned when, after the failure of that Conference, the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), held only two weeks ago, has confirmed that the international treaties in this area are basically only springboards for certain States, serving to fulfil their ambitions and desires for domination? Furthermore, it is deplorable that the CTBT is still not in force nine years after its adoption. We therefore take this opportunity to encourage the 11 countries listed in Annex II of the CTBT to sign or ratify the Treaty, as appropriate, so that it can swiftly enter into force. We also need to resolve to put an end to the production of fissile materials and to strengthen people's awareness about disarmament by making nuclear-weapon-free zones viable and protecting them.

In addition, the current situation of disarmament mechanisms is far from satisfactory, because the Conference on Disarmament has not managed to reach consensus on an agenda, and the same is true for the Disarmament Commission, despite the efforts to do so. The most recent disappointment is the outcome document (resolution 60/1) adopted by the recent summit, which failed to include an explicit reference to disarmament in the text.

Nevertheless, we must not yield to resignation or pessimism; on the contrary, let us continue to hope. Indeed, it is inspired by such hope that the delegation of Burkina Faso approaches the sixtieth session. You can be assured, Mr. Chairman, of our forthright and genuine cooperation for the success of the mandate entrusted to you.

Mr. Williams Slate (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your well-deserved election and in congratulating the other members of the Bureau. You can count on my delegation's firm support as you carry out your work. I should also like to express to the delegation of Indonesia my sincere sentiments of grief and sympathy in connection with the victims of the recent terrorist

attack. Likewise, we express our feelings of sorrow to our Central American brethren, who are being hard hit by the floods caused by Hurricane Stan in that region.

My delegation endorses the statement made by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the countries members of the Rio Group. However, I wish to address several important aspects of importance to Nicaragua.

As a small country, we are concerned that the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the High-level Plenary Meeting made no mention of the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation. That omission, however, must not affect the conduct or the result of the First Committee's work towards the objective of general and complete disarmament.

My delegation is also concerned at the frustrating outcome of the Seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in May this year. As the representative of Argentina said on behalf of the Rio Group, the lack of agreement on the adoption of a document that would have reflected existing challenges alerts us to the fact that work must still be carried out on the three pillars of the regime: disarmament, non-proliferation and the exclusively peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Furthermore, in the multilateral sphere, we are concerned that the stagnation in the Conference on Disarmament continues, as in previous years, that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not entered into force and that the NPT has still not achieved universality because of the obstinate refusal of some States to join the Treaty — States that wish recognition as nuclear Powers.

As a founding party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, Nicaragua congratulates the Government of Mexico on the successful holding of the First Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, in Tlatelolco, Mexico, from 26 to 28 April 2005. That Conference was a very important demonstration of humankind's determination to pursue efforts to bring about a safer world, free of nuclear weapons.

The problem of mines in Nicaragua is rooted in the civil war we suffered through during the 1980s. When our national demining programme began its work in the mid-1990s, it registered 145,902 mines in former war zones. Of these, roughly 80 per cent have now been deactivated.

As a party to the Ottawa Convention, Nicaragua has committed itself to completely eliminating all of these death-dealing devices throughout its national territory; but given problems of locating them — due to the mountainous terrain, lack of maps or imprecise maps and the moving of mines because of natural phenomena, including Hurricane Mitch in 1998 — the completion of the demining programme, which was supposed to have taken place in 2004, has had to be postponed to the end of 2006. The chief objective of the programme is to come up with practical and innovative solutions for detecting anti-personnel mines in rural areas, cleaning up mountainous or heavily vegetated areas and mechanically neutralizing military artifacts, thus protecting the lives of the sappers who are responsible for the demining process. In the context of this programme, we intend to destroy over 4,000 mines in 2005 in the Jinotega department alone.

Through the Programme for Demining Assistance in Central America (PADCA), the Organization of American States (OAS) is channeling and administering resources from donor communities to support Nicaragua's national humanitarian demining programme. Among the donors to the Nicaragua programme, whom we thank for their support, are Sweden, Norway, Canada, the European Union, the United States and the United Kingdom. Contributors of specialized personnel include Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, the United States, Guatemala, Venezuela and Chile, to whom we are also very grateful.

We expect soon, with the backing of the international community, to be able to declare Nicaragua a territory free of anti-personnel mines.

Nicaragua takes the view that disarmament can be achieved in a climate of confidence based upon mutual respect, a climate that can foster better relations based on justice, solidarity and cooperation. We also consider that regional and subregional arms control and disarmament agreements can promote the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts.

In Nicaragua, we are doing our utmost to prevent and combat the illicit trade in weapons and to move forward with arms control in general. It is our view that a build-up of such weapons poses a real threat to

our people and to national, regional and international security and is a destabilizing factor for countries.

During the 1980s, Nicaragua suffered severely the horrors and the aftermath of a war that took a toll of more than 50,000 lives. The lessons we learned showed us the way, as well as the need, to work to create national, regional and international consensus on these issues by exchanging the experience we have gained in such areas as the collection, destruction and transfer of weapons and in making current international policies more effective.

As an example of the leadership that Nicaragua has shown in regional initiatives to reduce arms unilaterally and voluntarily, 1,000 SAM-7 missiles were destroyed in 2004. This effort is part of a gradual reduction in missiles and arsenals and reflects our determination to take specific steps in Central America, seeking a reasonable balance of forces among the countries in the subregion. Our Government's commitment to gradually destroying these missiles remains immutable.

At the twenty-sixth meeting of the Central American Security Commission, held in June 2003, a Central American project to prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons was adopted. Nicaragua was selected as the headquarters of the regional executive unit for that effort. The priority areas identified for implementing this project are: harmonizing legislation to control small arms and light weapons; enhancing national capability to control firearms; supporting the collection of weapons; and ensuring the destruction of weapons — all in order to prevent or reduce the abuse of small arms and light weapons and contribute to a culture of peace. The preparatory phase has contributed to progress in defining the problem and building better working relations with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), national Governments, non-governmental organizations and regional organizations.

In 2004, as coordinator of the project, Nicaragua spurred the implementation of training and technical assistance programmes, with the backing of Japan, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and UNDP, to create multidisciplinary national commissions for the control of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and for export, import and trans-border controls for small arms and light weapons.

Moreover, at a meeting held in Managua on 30 and 31 August of this year, Central American ministers responsible for good governance and defence made progress in considering the matter of a code of conduct governing arms, munitions and explosives transfers and those of related materials, as an urgent element of progress towards a common arms transfer policy. A proposed code was introduced by Nicaragua, and we hope and expect it will be taken up at the thirtieth meeting of the Central American Security Commission, which will take place on 18 October in Managua. The meeting, among other things, will hear of strides made in our region in preventing and punishing illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Through those regional actions, the member countries of the Central American Integration system have reaffirmed our commitment to pursuing and spearheading practical measures required to put an end to the use of and illegal trade in these weapons in our subregion.

Mr. Gatan (Philippines): I am making this statement on behalf of Ambassador Baja.

Mr. Chairman, the Philippines joins other delegations in congratulating you and the members of your Bureau on your well-deserved election. The Philippines pays heed to your appeal for the First Committee to conduct its business with an eye to a positive and constructive outcome. In this regard, you can count on the Philippine delegation's cooperation, including in the brevity of this statement.

The Philippines has noted the lamentation of a number of delegations that the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) failed to include a section on disarmament and non-proliferation. Their ventilation of disappointment should not, however, be construed as the absence of a mandate or as a diminished mandate for the General Assembly, through its First Committee, to discuss disarmament issues.

It must be borne in mind that the 2005 world summit was convened to review the implementation of the goals contained in the 2000 Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2). Although world leaders did not include a section on disarmament in their summit outcome document last month, this omission in no way cancels their disarmament goals contained in the 2000 Millennium Declaration.

Let me cite the five disarmament goals contained in the 2000 Millennium Declaration, which remain valid today and which should continue to guide our work during the current session. The world leaders resolved: first, to ensure the implementation by States parties of treaties in such areas as arms control and disarmament; secondly, to take concerted action against international terrorism and to accede as soon as possible to all relevant international conventions; thirdly, to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons; fourthly, to take concerted action to end illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons; and fifthly, to call on all States to consider acceding to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Those five goals do not exclude other options to advance disarmament, because the world leaders stated in the chapeau of the Millennium Declaration's section on peace, security and disarmament: "We will spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war, whether within or between States, which has claimed more than 5 million lives in the past decade" *(resolution 55/2, para. 8)*.

In the light of that understanding, my delegation is in full accord with the views expressed by the President of the General Assembly who wrote to all delegations on 30 September:

> "The [world summit] document should not set a limit on our ambitions; rather it should be a beachhead from which we launch ourselves forward. There are some areas that the document does not address in detail, where many would — rightly — like to see progress during the sixtieth session. One such area is disarmament and non-proliferation, on which I encourage new and creative thinking in all appropriate forums".

Speaking of launching ourselves forward through new and creative thinking, the Philippines supports the new course of multilateral arms-control diplomacy spearheaded by Norway and six other countries from different regions of the world. Although this new initiative was not reflected in the World Summit Outcome, it nevertheless responds to the call of world leaders in their Millennium Declaration disarmament goals. We have to consider this Norwegian initiative because of the promise it holds in advancing our collective effort to carve a more peaceful world.

The failure of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission to generate substantive results in recent sessions is a reality we have to face. We should convert such failures to stepping stones leading to positive outcomes in their next rounds of activities. We should not relent in our resolve to achieve constructive results, for no man-made challenges are insurmountable.

We should also draw inspiration from the progress we have achieved in other fields of disarmament and in the promotion of peace and security. Such progress includes the early conclusion of negotiations on a draft international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons; the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism; the growing number of countries concluding additional protocols with the International Atomic Energy Agency; the increasing support for the new Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War, the Mine-Ban Treaty; the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty; and the increasing number of countries that have either signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

A salient consensus reflected at the world summit deals with the interrelatedness of development, peace and human rights. In the same vein, the interrelationship between disarmament and development deserves particular attention because of the increasing resources poured into military expenditures despite the prevalence of poverty throughout the world. Additional financing for development can be obtained from cuts in military expenditures. Such cuts could facilitate the efforts of developed countries to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance.

The Philippines associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Concerning the ASEAN statement, my delegation wishes to invite attention again to the decision of the

ministerial meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, welcoming the initiatives of the Philippines and Indonesia to promote interfaith dialogue to enhance mutual trust and understanding among peoples for durable peace and security.

Mr. Manis (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to extend to you, Sir, our sincere congratulations and appreciation on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee. I am confident that with your skill and experience you will capably guide our deliberations on disarmament and international security issues to a successful outcome. I wish you and the other members of the Bureau every success. I also wish to thank your predecessor, along with the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and the other members of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, for their great efforts in developing multilateral mechanisms for international cooperation in the field of disarmament for the maintenance of international peace and security.

At a time when good news is scarce, I am pleased to congratulate the International Atomic Energy Agency and its Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBareidi, on receiving this year's Nobel Prize for Peace.

My delegation supports the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Today, we are meeting to discuss matters of international security and disarmament, at a time of numerous international and regional differences on arms-related issues. This demonstrates that the only way to consolidate international security is to activate multilateral channels with a view to decisively grappling with the dangers of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and nuclear weapons in particular, so that we do not further upset the balance of power between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States.

It is regrettable that the sixtieth session of the General Assembly comes at a time when the international community is unable to reach consensus on disarmament issues. The rigid positions on disarmament sections for this year's summit outcome did not emerge from a vacuum. Rather, they resulted from a series of setbacks that have been plaguing multilateral disarmament endeavours since the Final Document of the first special session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. Beginning with the failure in the Disarmament Commission and ending with that of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held last May here at the United Nations, no substantive document commensurate with the aspirations of Member States has been agreed upon. Although some States have taken unilateral and bilateral initiatives to reduce their arsenals of strategic nuclear weapons, other major Powers are continuing to develop their chemical, nuclear and biological technological capabilities and are competing to conduct tests on the pretext of deterrence and national security, despite the existence of numerous protocols, instruments and conventions calling for the prohibition of such practices. Many States are concerned about the selectivity and lack of fairness that is evident with regard to disarmament issues. Others question the ability of such instruments to be globally and effectively enforced. The degree to which such conventions are useful depends not on how many of them there are or on the number of States that have acceded to them, but on whether they are applied in a comprehensive and just manner.

Conflicts, wars and hotbeds of tension in various parts of the world mean that some countries are living in a state of defence preparedness, as clearly reflected in the increasing military expenditure of some States. By contrast, contributions in the context of the Millennium Development Goals for pressing needs such as poverty, natural disasters and the environment are very modest and are even being reduced. Therein lies the paradox: the criteria are unworkable. We emphasize the need for the nuclear-weapon States to make a serious attempt to reduce their spending on weapons programmes with a view to phasing out and eliminating their nuclear and strategic arsenals. Measures designed to develop internationally binding instruments should provide protection and guarantees to those States that do not possess such technology. That should not derogate from the right of any State to engage in nuclear research for peaceful purposes.

As Under-Secretary-General Abe told the Committee, there is a pressing international need for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world. We believe that would be the best way to foster nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, thereby entrenching the pillars of international and regional peace and security. As

members of the Committee know, security is indivisible. It is true that numerous States have signed or ratified treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. The signatories of such conventions represent 50 per cent of the world's countries. However, there are many regions of the world in which tensions run high, and which need nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly the Middle East region. Such a zone could have been established in that region had it not been for Israel's continued refusal to subject its facilities to the international safeguards regime, thus genuinely threatening security and stability in that region of tension, as well as in the rest of the world.

We pay tribute to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for its courageous initiative to voluntarily eliminate its programmes in that respect. The Sudan is a real partner in international efforts to achieve disarmament. In addition to acceding to numerous relevant international instruments and conventions, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), last year we signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), after taking part in a workshop held in Vienna on the objectives of the CTBT Organization and its work throughout the world.

In 2003, my country hosted the first Conference of the African National Authorities of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Conference adopted numerous important recommendations emphasizing the need to declare Africa a chemical-weapon-free zone, and the need for States to use nuclear technology for peaceful uses. In addition, my country was one of the first to sign and ratify the Ottawa Treaty on landmines.

We are playing a role in various areas of disarmament at the international and regional levels. We believe that, both regionally and internationally, multilateral action helps to ensure the universality of conventions and treaties and to enforce them.

A disarmament matter of high priority for us is the issue of small arms and light weapons. The Sudan has suffered more than most from that scourge, which has fanned the flames of internal strife. As everyone knows, some African tribes consider the possession of weapons as an integral part of the rights of the tribe and an expression of its power vis-a-vis other tribes. There can be no doubt that this makes the elimination or control of such weapons more difficult. The Sudan is more aware than most of the need to decisively combat this phenomenon. We have therefore been working actively in all regional and international forums with a view to curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We stress the need for an international mechanism for weapons-producing countries to mark and trace such weapons. My country is making great efforts nationally to curb small arms and light weapons.

At the beginning of this year, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed, putting an end to a war that had continued in my country for more than 20 years. The Sudan, as a State that is moving from war to peace, calls for the enforcement of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes. As the Committee knows well, the components of these programmes are interrelated, and any national efforts in that regard warrant regional and international support.

The Sudan is part of the Horn of Africa, an area of high tension and conflict. It is also part of the Great Lakes region, where small arms and light weapons are spreading and are intertwined with more complex issues. The Sudan is therefore paying particular attention to DDR and is looking forward to receiving international and regional support, in particular with regard to the relevant technical aspects.

Our deliberations at this current session must be different from those of the past, given recent developments with regard to armaments and real fears that terrorist groups might acquire weapons of mass destruction. The Committee thus has an even greater responsibility this year. The disarmament stalemate should not be allowed to continue. The world must be made secure from all threats so that we can focus all of our efforts on peace, stability, reconstruction, sustainable development and prosperity for mankind, not on the machinery of war and destruction.

Mr. Vila Coma (Andorra) (spoke in Spanish): I should like, first of all, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee.

One the most important events in the one-year history of the United Nations has concluded and the deliberations of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session are now under way. The High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, in which the majority of world leaders participated, adopted a document (resolution 60/1) whose provisions offer real

solutions to problems facing the international community.

The summit culminated in the adoption of that document, which represents great progress in the areas of disarmament, security and human rights. Beyond the political statements in those areas, the document is clearly truncated in one of the most important areas related to peace. I am speaking of the omission of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

The alarm sounded by the total absence of such recommendations is no accident. It is the result of an international climate where the ghosts of yesteryear, of the notion of guaranteeing peace through the fear of confrontation, have once again come to haunt us, as reflected in the breakdown of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the lethargy of the Disarmament Commission.

As it marks the sixtieth anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the international community could have made recompense for what was one of the greatest cataclysms in the history of humankind, by once and for all buttressing the foundations for the global eradication of the use of atomic energy for weapons purposes.

Threats to international peace and security are ever more obvious, given the steady proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In the face of this threat, the international community must raise its voice and turn those policies around, promoting instead the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes and demanding the total and irreversible destruction of weapons arsenals.

Andorra supports action and measures taken by the United Nations in connection with the trade in weapons of all kinds and places on record its complete agreement with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in order to preserve international peace and security.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): Mr. Chairman, let me congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. You embrace the challenging task of energizing the work of the First Committee. It is my sincere wish, Sir, that, under your leadership, this Committee will achieve positive and fruitful results.

My delegation would like to express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack in Bali, as well as to the Government and the people of Indonesia.

We share with other countries the sense of frustration that the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was unable to produce a consensus document on substantive issues and that all mention of disarmament and non-proliferation was omitted from the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). Moreover, existing conventions are not always implemented as they should be, and the ratification of the new ones, unfortunately, is not moving ahead with the speed for which we had hoped.

The people and the Government of San Marino, a country that has lived in peace for 700 years without an army, believe strongly that the greatest weapon that any civilization can have is the power of reason. I believe that all of us in this room have something in common: we share a fear that the terrorists will one day successfully use weapons of mass destruction. The only question is where and when.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Terrorism is a cancer not easy to eradicate. Therefore, today more than ever, it is imperative to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction without delay. It is unfortunate that this process is moving slowly due to lingering distrust among some Governments, coupled with the difficulty of international organizations providing accurate monitoring.

We, like many other countries that do not have weapons of mass destruction, have to put our lives and our future in the hands of others. Moreover, for a small country like ours, one single terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction could destroy the entire population.

We believe that one of the most important tasks is to inform and educate civil society at large about the dangers of our time, especially in those countries where the leaders act aggressively. In fact, it is my belief that a country's own citizens can be the most effective negotiators with their Government and that, if properly informed about the potential catastrophic outcome of the use of weapons of mass destruction, they will take a stand with their leaders to preserve their own lives, as well as their children's.

Mr. Levanon (Israel): Since this is the first time I am participating in the work of the First Committee, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and to express my delegation's full support for the important work being done by the Committee you chair. The issues at stake are important and need to be addressed with clarity.

For the past few years, the world of disarmament has stagnated, due to the inability of the parties to agree on a common agenda, on how to face the different challenges we face and on the priorities for our work. The stalemate we are witnessing in the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission is a clear reflection of the situation in the world of disarmament. The very recent inability to agree on language dealing with disarmament and non-proliferation for the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) underlines this stalemate all too well.

These forums do not operate in a vacuum. The objective we seek in disarmament is to tackle threats to global security and find solutions to existing challenges. If we leave behind us our obstinacy in dealing with outdated or irrelevant issues and if we abandon the obstructive all-or-nothing approach that has become the norm, and come to realize that we need indeed a pragmatic and realistic approach, then substantive work in the various forums will restart.

I would like to enumerate the threats and challenges we are facing today. The first challenge is that of further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), their means of delivery and their technology by States and non-State actors. The second is the irresponsible behaviour of States, their non-compliance with the obligations they took on when adhering to the various regimes and the clandestine WMD projects disguised by those States as civilian projects. The third is terrorism in all its aspects. Here, it is not only the phenomenon that represents the threat but also its possible connection with weapons of mass destruction. The fourth challenge is the intentional use of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and other types of weapons capable of causing large-scale casualties to civilians, and the accumulation of small arms and light weapons, ammunition, explosives and short-range rockets.

Today, words can be as deadly as weapons. The continuous incitement to violence and hatred by State, secular and religious leaders, as well as the repeated use of language threatening the very existence of States, can be just as destabilizing a factor as certain types of weapons.

The perception of certain concepts needs to be adjusted. The international community needs to choose the appropriate tools to achieve its objective of strengthening global stability, peace and security. When disarmament is appropriate and relevant, then it should be the chosen tool. When the reality is such that disarmament becomes irrelevant — for example, in cases of conflict or existential threats — other instruments need to be considered. Given the current state of affairs and the challenges we face today, we are of the view that substantial weight should be given to non-proliferation efforts, on the basis of a policy of results-oriented diplomacy, with close cooperation on both bilateral and multilateral levels. Moreover, the conceptual and traditional association between progress in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation has become irrelevant. These are two issues differing in their nature that need to be conceptually and practically de-linked. The international community needs to strengthen the steps taken in the field of non-proliferation without seeking to link it to progress, or to a lack of progress, in the field of disarmament. Obviously, total and global disarmament, starting with peace between neighbours and good neighbourliness, remains an important goal.

The conceptual separation between fuel cycle technology for military purposes and the technology for civilian purposes needs to be reviewed. Developments in recent years have made it clear that the meantime proliferation of fuel cycle technologies could be diverted towards the development of military programmes. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that States acting in bad faith are prevented from exploiting the loopholes that exist in current international regimes and norms. By doing so, these States hamper members of the international community in enjoying their right to peaceful nuclear energy. On issues concerning the fuel cycle, as we have clearly witnessed in recent years, the right to benefit from nuclear technology for peaceful purposes — granted under article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — has been misused by some countries, primarily Iran, in their efforts to develop clandestine military nuclear programmes.

It has emerged that, notwithstanding its importance and advantages, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regime does not

provide a sufficient basis for uncovering clandestine nuclear programmes and facilities. It has also transpired that the technology, know-how and equipment needed to develop military nuclear programmes — in particular dual-use technologies in the field of the fuel cycle, and specifically uranium enrichment — have become much more accessible. The revelation of the existence of the Khan black market and proliferation networks — through which equipment, technology, whole facilities and even blueprints for weapons have been transferred — has shown that we are no longer facing only a small group of countries of concern in their export behaviour, but also, of increasing importance, non-State actors.

We are of the view that the traditional mechanisms of non-proliferation, important as they are, have proven to be insufficient to deal with current challenges. It is therefore our belief that new arrangements and tools need to be developed in order to complement those mechanisms and to address the real challenges.

As for terrorism, this year that ugly scourge struck again on many occasions and has caused thousands of casualties among innocent civilians. It is obvious that the establishment of a linkage between terrorism and WMD is only a question of time. Terrorist groups that acquire the technological capability to develop any type of WMD will use it. That dangerous threat, combined with the continuing trend of suicide terrorism that has hit lately — not only in our part of the word but also in London, in Sharm el-Sheikh, in Bali and elsewhere — have the potential to significantly disrupt security and stability of all, at every level — individual, global and regional. We therefore welcome Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), as it has been significant in advancing the joint struggle against WMD terrorism.

The attempt by some parties to grant a certain level of legitimacy to terrorist organizations and to tolerate the use of certain types of weapons by non-State actors is dangerous and inadmissible. No non-State actor should be allowed to obtain weapons such as landmines or MANPADS. Israel, for its part, has recently taken concrete measures in that regard. It decided to extend its moratorium on the export of any anti-personnel mines and undertook to adhere to the Wassenaar Arrangement guidelines on MANPADS.

Terrorism cannot exist in a vacuum: terrorist organizations are supported and financed by States. Therefore, the international community must take action to curb the flow of resources and arms to terrorist groups and their sponsors.

Regarding MANPADS, in our view, equal determination should be attached to the efforts undertaken by the international community to prevent terrorists and other non-State actors from acquiring and using MANPADS, very short range rockets and other types of missiles. Last year, for the first time this forum adopted a draft resolution, adopted by the General Assembly as resolution 59/90, providing guidelines for States to help prevent the unauthorized proliferation of MANPADS. I emphasize the importance of that resolution, and would like to see more steps taken to deal with this issue in a concrete and efficient way.

Concerning export controls, Israel supports and participates in international efforts to identify concrete and effective steps against the proliferation of WMD. We believe that cooperation between States in that regard should be increased and significantly strengthened. Consequently, Israel stresses the importance of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) at the national level by all members of the international community. In that regard, Israel has also expressed its support for the Proliferation Security Initiative and other export regimes such as the Megaport Initiative and the Container Security Initiative, and it will continue to do so in the future. We are of the view that tight export control regimes are crucial instruments in the efforts of States to prevent both State and non-State actors from acquiring WMD-related material. My country fully associates itself with the efforts made by the different export control regimes to address the challenges I have just described. Notwithstanding the significance of bilateral and multilateral efforts to confront these threats, this needs to be done primarily at the national level, since each State is responsible and accountable for its own actions.

For its part, Israel adopted last year an export and import control order designed to consolidate and further regulate control over exports of a chemical, biological and nuclear nature. That order includes a catch-all provision prohibiting the export of materials and items designated for WMD and establishes licensing requirements for sensitive items based on the

lists of the Australia Group and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. By that action, in addition to its unilateral adherence to the Missile Technology Control Regime guidelines since 1991, Israel is, de facto, in compliance with the different export control regimes.

Our part of the world continues to be characterized by clear and vigorous hostility towards Israel, in which violence and terrorism are unfortunately still part of daily life.

The international community has devoted much of its attention to addressing the threats related to weapons of mass destruction. It is only in the recent past that the threat of the illicit spread of conventional arms has been taken up more seriously. Conventional arms, in particular in unauthorized hands, are increasing human suffering in many parts of the world.

There are several principles that guide Israel in addressing the issue of conventional arms. First, arms as such do not pose threats, as aptly phrased many years ago in the saying, "A sword never kills anybody; it is a tool in the killer's hand". The poisonous combination of extensive armaments and hostile intentions is the genuine threat.

Secondly, armaments are in many cases a legitimate response to a given situation in which States are compelled to defend and secure their territory and population. Building confidence in a region will reduce the need for arms. When nations live together in a spirit of peace and good-neighbourliness, it will be possible to reduce armaments and increase transparency.

Thirdly, arms must be controlled and restraint must be exercised by every State in order to prevent unnecessary human suffering and loss of human life.

The uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons and their acquisition by terrorist or criminal elements invariably result in the loss of life. It is for this reason that my Government views the irresponsible use and transfer of conventional arms as a serious threat to regional and global security and stability.

Though we note substantive progress in the field of conventional arms control, there is yet no place for complacency in that regard. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has made a significant breakthrough that has demonstrated the political determination needed to address the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We, however, continue to believe that the lack of a clear call to prevent terrorists and other unauthorized entities from acquiring these weapons is one of its shortcomings. Nevertheless, the Programme of Action constitutes a good basis for addressing the phenomenon of illicit small arms and light weapons. Israel welcomes the positive outcome of the work of the Open-ended Working Group that has negotiated a new draft instrument on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons. Implementation of the new draft instrument and of the Programme of Action would contribute to reducing human suffering if implemented by all States. We are looking forward to the review conference of the Programme of Action to be held next July here in New York.

We hope the disengagement plan from Gaza that we have just carried out will alter for the better the security environment and significantly reduce the existential threats Israel is facing today. We expect the Palestinian Authority to implement its commitment to collect small arms and light weapons from terrorist organizations, thus barring terrorists from obtaining small arms and light weapons and munitions as well as denying them financial and other resources with which to acquire them. For Israel — as well as for other States in our region and for the international community — the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action has become even more relevant. This situation presents an opportunity for implementing the provisions set out in the Programme of Action. We consider this as a fundamental and crucial step for progress in the peace process.

At present, some neighbouring countries and other countries in our region have resolved to develop weapons of mass destruction, thus ignoring their legal obligations and supporting terrorist organizations. The combination of these acts, together with public threats to the very existence of the State of Israel, is moving our region away from the vision of peace and security.

The Middle East needs a restructured security architecture built on the foundation of cooperation in the field of security, whereby each State will be reassured of the safety of its population and its peaceful existence, allowing the development of normalized relations and bringing prosperity to all.

We can start with confidence-building measures, enhancing trust and strengthening security, measures that will create the conditions for sustainable peace and stability, ease tensions and enable us to confront together the new threats to the region. Reducing threats to regional security will pave the way for a reduction in arms accumulation and the arms race in all its aspects, thus giving the economic, education and social components of national security the leading role they deserve.

Regarding the WMD-free zone, it is well known that Israel supports the eventual establishment of a mutually and effectively verifiable zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, as well as their means of delivery. The establishment of such a zone should be based on arrangements freely arrived at by all the States of the region.

Israel believes that the political realities in the Middle East mandate a practical step-by-step approach. This process should begin with modest confidence-building measures followed by the establishment of peaceful relations, reconciliation and good-neighbourliness, which could possibly be complemented by conventional and non-conventional arms control measures. This process could eventually lead to more ambitious goals such as the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

This objective can be reached only as the result of direct dialogue between all States of the region. Artificial or imposed measures whose goal is to reduce Israel's capacity to defend itself cannot help in establishing trust, security and peace in the region.

In conclusion, we feel that it is the duty of this forum to find consensus that will be achievable, realistic and practical and that will eventually address the actual challenges to international peace and security. If we are to improve human security meaningfully and make sustainable development possible, we should adopt an approach that will enable us to engage seriously in finding a solution. Trying to circumvent consensus will only jeopardize the integrity of our work and may hinder the attainment of the important task with which we have been entrusted.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I wish first of all to join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. My congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

It still remains an urgent challenge today to prevent a nuclear arms race and realize a nuclear-free world through the nuclear disarmament process. Although it has been over 10 years since the end of the cold war, resort to nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States has not decreased, but rather it has increased. The doctrine of a nuclear pre-emptive strike is openly preached to render nuclear deterrence obsolete, and the development of new types of nuclear weapons and their qualitative improvement are rapidly being pursued.

As long as there are attempts to retain a permanent monopoly of nuclear weapons and dominate the world with their help, we cannot think of disarmament, peace and security at all. We must make a cool-headed analysis of the reality of the situation and present a correct solution in order to achieve practical disarmament and safeguard durable global peace.

With regard to the issue of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction so often addressed by certain countries, it is none other than the threat of existing nuclear weapons that has caused this proliferation. Therefore, if we are to achieve non-proliferation, our first and most important task must be to completely destroy nuclear weapons, the cause of global proliferation, as soon as possible.

Nuclear disarmament is the best way to stop proliferation. Without nuclear disarmament, there will be no non-proliferation whatsoever. If the international community truly wants the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and does not want existing disarmament regimes to be destroyed or weakened, it should question the nuclear — threat policy of the nuclear super-Power — the cause of weapons proliferation — and take practical steps to remove these weapons. Nuclear-weapon States must abandon their nuclear doctrines based on the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons, commitment themselves not to be the first to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances and come to the table to discuss the relevant international agreements.

To insist exclusively on non-proliferation while turning away from assurances of the non-use of nuclear weapons is to hide from reality. Assurances of the non-use of nuclear weapons are important for the survival

of non-nuclear-weapon States and for the promotion of the global nuclear disarmament process. Non-nuclear-weapon States demand unconditional assurances from nuclear-weapon States that they will not use nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

Today, some countries choose to strengthen their self-defence capabilities because they believe that none of the existing arms control regimes, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), can ensure the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. If we connive in or tolerate the gangster-like logic that only big countries can possess nuclear weapons in order to threaten or attack small countries, then essential changes will take place in the international order that will surely push non-nuclear-weapon States towards acquiring nuclear deterrence.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a small country that is under constant threat from the super-Power, the United States. We could not but take the road of nuclear deterrence, because of the nuclear threats of the United States, which are based on its policy of deep-rooted hostility towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the past half a century.

Our nuclear weapons are not intended to threaten or strike others. We have no intention to keep them permanently. There will be no need for us to keep a single nuclear weapon if the relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States are normalized, if bilateral confidence is built and if we are no longer exposed to the United States nuclear threat.

During the recent fourth round of the six-party talks, held in Beijing, we approached the discussions seriously, with magnanimity and a principled, fair and above-board position aimed at achieving our consistent and ultimate goal of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula by any means, thus enabling the talks to lead to an agreement on the principles to that end within a broad framework and overcoming all the challenges. The Joint Statement reflects our principled position concerning the resolution of the nuclear issue and, at the same time, clearly specifies the obligations of the United States and South Korea — the responsible parties with respect to the denuclearization of the whole Korean peninsula. What is most essential at this stage is that the United States provide light-water reactors to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as soon as possible, as evidence that it is removing nuclear threats against us and recognizing our rights to engage in peaceful nuclear activities.

Our firm and ultimate objective is the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, and our consistent position is that the nuclear issue must be resolved peacefully through dialogue and negotiation. However, denuclearization cannot be achieved solely through our unilateral abandonment of our nuclear-weapon programme. The most urgent requirement for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is an immediate end to the nuclear threat of the United States and its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, aimed at overthrowing the regime. The United States should take decisive practical steps to remove the last legacy of the cold war on the Korean peninsula.

Today, it is necessary to turn the unstable armistice into a system aimed at a system for lasting peace and to abolish the last remnants of the cold war on the Korean peninsula with a view to the peace and reunification of Korea as well as the peace and security of North-East Asia and of the rest of the world. If the armistice system is transformed into a system for peace on the Korean peninsula, then the hostile policy and nuclear threat of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — the root cause of the nuclear issue — will vanish, which will naturally lead to the achievement of denuclearization.

Today, thanks to our independent policy and the Songun policy, the dangers of war are being prevented and peace is being maintained on the Korean peninsula and throughout the region. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will do all it can to remove external threats and to guarantee lasting peace on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Kryzhanivsky (Ukraine): I would like to express my warmest congratulations to you, Ambassador Choi, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. Please be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

The Ukrainian delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union presidency. In our statement, we would like to touch upon some additional issues that are of considerable importance to Ukraine.

Certain trends currently observed in the field of international security have had and will continue to have significant implications for the prospects of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. We strongly believe that effective multilateralism is more important than ever before. That should remain the basic principle for negotiations and for addressing concerns related to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

In the light of the growing threat posed by terrorists, the efforts to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of their delivery systems have acquired particular importance. Collective steps should be taken to ensure the universality of existing international treaties in the sphere of non-proliferation and disarmament as well as strict compliance with their provisions.

Ukraine appreciates the Security Council's active involvement in addressing the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We support the objectives of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and believe that full implementation of its provisions will essentially reduce that threat. In that connection, I cannot fail to mention the progress made in activities within the framework of the Proliferation Security Initiative.

The establishment of the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction is an important contribution to the enhancement of multilateral non-proliferation efforts. We appreciate the recently adopted decision concerning Ukraine's participation in the Partnership.

I have the privilege of drawing the attention of the Committee to the fact that last year marked the tenth anniversary of Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Ukraine has ensured the reduction of all of the nuclear weapons that it inherited from the former Soviet Union, thereby enhancing significantly the international non-proliferation regime and global security and creating favourable conditions for the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

As part of Ukraine's obligations under the START I Treaty, we still have to eliminate 5,000 tons of solid propellant from our SS-24 intercontinental ballistic missiles. Ukraine has created a State programme for the disposal of that significant amount of dangerous material. We appeal to the international community to find ways and means to provide additional financial assistance for that demilitarization project, which is considered to be an integral part of Ukraine's nuclear disarmament programme.

We deeply regret that 2005 NPT Review Conference was unable to reach a substantive outcome. Furthermore, States expected much from the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting in that regard, but again we witnessed failure. There are deep disagreements on basic approaches. Such trends are of particular concern for Ukraine. It is also a cause for regret that the well-thought-out and balanced initiative of Norway and other States aimed at promoting non-proliferation and disarmament, which we fully support, was not accepted by the high-level forum.

We would like to reiterate our support for the decisions and the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and for the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Ukraine believes that legally-binding security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear weapon States parties to the NPT will significantly strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime by eliminating plausible incentives for pursuing nuclear capabilities. In this connection, the reaffirmation by many States of their support for the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty is encouraging.

Ukraine believes that International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards serve as an important tool for sustaining an environment in which nuclear energy can be used for peaceful purposes with no threat of proliferation. We strongly support the verification role of the IAEA. The universal adoption and faithful implementation of the strengthened safeguards system is a prerequisite for an effective and credible nuclear non-proliferation regime. As for Ukraine, the preparatory activities for the ratification of the Additional Protocol signed by Ukraine in 2000 have been completed, and ratification is expected very soon.

In the light of the recent Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Ukraine continues to stress the vital importance of the Treaty's universalization. We call on all States, particularly those listed in annex II of the Treaty, to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay and unconditionally. Pending entry into force, we call on all States to abide by a

moratorium and to refrain from any action contrary to the obligations and provisions of the CTBT.

The universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and ensuring its strict implementation should remain our priority in the field of chemical disarmament. We stress the importance of States possessors of chemical weapons complying fully with their obligations under the Convention. On 10 October this year, under the auspices of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and NATO, Ukraine will host a multinational exercise entitled Joint Assistance 2005. That joint endeavour will aim to enhance the national capacity of the States parties to the CWC to provide assistance and protection against chemical weapons, strengthening their ability to coordinate efforts and respond in a concerted fashion.

Ukraine fully supports the purposes of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and strictly complies with its obligations under that treaty. It is time to make decisive efforts to develop an appropriate verification mechanism for the BWC.

The gravity of the problem of small arms and light weapons is clearly illustrated by the fact that such weapons cause more than 90 per cent of all casualties in armed conflicts. As part of our efforts to fulfil the Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Ukraine, with the assistance of the NATO Partnership for Peace Trust Fund, expects to destroy 1.5 million small arms and light weapons and 133,000 tons of surplus ammunition.

It is my pleasure to inform delegations that Ukraine ratified the Ottawa Convention in May this year. We are developing national legislation to ensure the effective implementation of our obligations under that document. Ukraine is fully committed to the goals of the Mine Ban Treaty.

Mr. Amolo (Kenya): I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations in New York, Ambassador Bahemuka.

I would like to offer warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. You have Kenya's full support. Kenya associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Union.

I congratulate the International Atomic Energy Agency and its Director General, Mohamed ElBaradei, on having won the Nobel Peace Prize.

We express heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of Indonesia following the terrorist bomb attack last weekend in Bali. For us, it underscores two points. It conclusively illustrates that, first, such terrorist attacks can occur anywhere and affect everyone and that, secondly, the patent inability of the multilateral system to definitively address that and other disarmament-related matters will lead some to resort to unilateral measures, thus weakening the multilateral infrastructure, which we in Kenya wholeheartedly embrace and seek to replicate.

With multilateral solutions to disarmament issues obviously under stress, the inability of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (*resolution 60/1*) to point us to any meaningful direction on disarmament and non-proliferation matters was a major disappointment. If we add to that the Disarmament Commission's inability to hold any substantive meetings in 2005, the failure of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to reach agreement on any substantive issues last May, the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament — even in the attempt to agree an agenda — and the delay of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, it becomes clear that a disarmament diplomacy malaise is setting in, and new, carefully thought-out initiatives become even more attractive.

We can become more relevant, however, by revitalizing our work, reaffirming our raison d'être and thinking creatively about new solutions. In this regard, Kenya welcomes and joins the initiative by some Member States to re-energize disarmament diplomacy at the Conference on Disarmament by forming ad hoc working groups on various issues that would cease operations as soon as the Conference on Disarmament began its work. This approach would help. We believe that political will, carefully calibrated to produce the most desirable results for all, is a silver bullet, and that it will turn the tide. The status quo is not an option.

Our disappointment in the obvious lack of progress on some issues before this Committee cannot overshadow a growing sense of optimism that some

real progress has been made on the issue of small arms and light weapons. The positive progress we have seen in our region in confronting this problem, taken together with the international multilateral process that gave birth to a new draft instrument on marki nd tracing, are positive signs we should pursue. We proceed carefully, however, striving to bring delegations on board to achieve full consensus.

On 17 September 2005, just before the gener debate began, His Excellency President Mwai Kibai of the Republic of Kenya called on the Secretary-General to study the matter of negotiating a treaty on the arms trade. Other ideas have been floated, including requesting the General Assembly to authorize an intergovernmental group of experts to explore ways of codifying cooperation on the issue of the illicit sale of small arms and light weapons. We note that others support the position that minimum international controls on the transfer of small arms and light weapons and provisions on ammunition should be included in the United Nations Programme of Action and should be discussed at the Preparatory Committee meeting in January 2006 and the Review Conference in June 2006.

Whichever direction we take, let us not lose the momentum to consolidate real gains on this troublesome but malleable subject of disarmament. The Secretary-General's report (A/60/161) describes well the emerging consensus on this matter. Our efforts should propel this issue to fruition.

Our region is a trailblazer in combating the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons. We have moved from debate to the implementation of clear road maps, incorporating the twin principles of ownership and partnership. Since the First Biennial Meeting of States, in July 2003, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa have made significant achievements in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. This has been carried out primarily through implementation of the Coordinated Agenda for Action on the Problem of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, adopted in November 2000; the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; and the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

The third Ministerial Review Conference of the Nairobi Declaration was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 20 to 21 June 2005. All 11 States parties signatories to the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol were represented. The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, though not a member, attended the Conference and was admitted as the twelfth member of that subregional initiative. The Conference approved the following documents: the Agreement on the Establishment of a Regional Centre on Small Arms to ordinate implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa, which will succeed the Nairobi Secretariat; the Ministerial Declaration on Practical Implementation of Small Arms Action in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa; and the Best Practice Guidelines and Minimum Common Standards on Key Issues in the Implementation of the Nairobi Protocol, including stockpile management; import, export and transit; and marking, tracing and brokering. We expect that these Best Practice Guidelines will be domesticated into the national legislation of member States by the end of April 2006.

Concerning capacity-building, the Regional Centre, with technical support from civil-society partners, has developed a training curriculum for law enforcement agencies, civil society and senior management. This training curriculum has been pre-tested in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, and has been found workable.

The Third Ministerial Review Conference of June 2005 welcomed the International Workshop on Global Principles for Arms Transfers held at Dar es Salaam in February 2005, the progress made towards creating consensus on the need for global principles for arms transfer controls and agreement on implementation of the Nairobi Protocol, which are consistent with the principles of the idea of an arms-trade treaty, which we support. In extolling the virtues of this successful regional effort, the solid external assistance it has received should be mentioned. We encourage more of the same. We look forward to the January 2006 meeting of the Preparatory Committee and the June 2006 Review Conference to deepen the normative environment on this importa t disarmament agenda.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, headquartered in Lomé, Togo, operates on the basis of voluntary contributions from Member States and some resources from the

Secretariat. We note with concern the Secretary-General's disquiet about the uncertainty of operations, owing to a constant drop in voluntary contributions. Although projects are being implemented, such as the Small Arms Transparency and Control Regime, it is clear that the Regional Centre's dire financial situation ought to be addressed more vigorously. Kenya encourages the Department for Disarmament Affairs to continue its efforts to identify ways of ensuring the Centre's operations, taking into account Africa's needs, as well as issues of efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The conclusions reached by the Secretary-General in his report of 22 July 2005 (A/60/153), need to be carefully implemented in order to enable the Centre to realize its mandate addressing Africa's needs in disarmament.

The First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction was successfully held in Nairobi from 29 November to 3 December 2004. The resounding positive international expression of commitment by States parties in achieving the Convention's objectives marks another key success for disarmament diplomacy. We must make resolute efforts to ensure that the Nairobi Plan of Action is implemented to the fullest, realizing, finally, our vision of a totally mine-free world. The plight and the painful picture of our fellow human beings afflicted by these "weapons of small destruction" must come to an end.

Kenya signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism on 15 September 2005. Kenya's desire, along with that of the international community, to prevent terrorist acts using radioactive material, goes to the heart of this Committee's important agenda.

International terrorism remains one of the most serious challenges to global peace, security and stability. In this technological era, it has become imperative to ensure that weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and radioactive material, do not end up in the possession of persons or groups intent on committing acts of terror. Kenya, therefore, welcomes the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and is among the countries that recently became signatories. Kenya is also party to 12 previously existing treaties on this subject and to the African Union Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. We hope consensus will be achieved on the outstanding issues in preparing a comprehensive convention on international terrorism in order to facilitate its conclusion during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

Our task is huge. Our political will must be revived because the stakes are so high. This session must break the mould and propel us to reach real progress on disarmament.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Sir, allow me to add my voice to those of colleagues who preceded me in congratulating you wholeheartedly on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I wish you success and Godspeed in your endeavours. I would be remiss if I failed also to extend our congratulations to the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur on their well deserved election. We are confident that under your leadership, and with the cooperation of the other members of the Bureau, the Committee's work will be crowned with success. Let me also take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his commendable efforts in the field of disarmament and for the comprehensive statement he delivered at the beginning of the general debate of the First Committee. We wish him every success.

We meet at a propitious time to affirm our resolve and interest in achieving peace and security for our peoples. As representatives of our peoples, Governments and countries, we are duty-bound to arrive at a consensus through which we can consolidate the pillars of international peace and security. Failure to arrive at a consensus on the items before the Committee would seriously jeopardize international peace and security. It would also allow the powerful — be they individual States or groups — to prevail, given the obvious lack of a real commitment to multilateralism and to the agreements and treaties governing the proliferation, production and threat of weapons.

We deplore the lack of a section dedicated to disarmament in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) adopted by heads of State or Government at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. It weakens the document, which does not live up to our expectations and goals. The Assembly lost an opportunity to reaffirm the commitments undertaken by nuclear-weapon States at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The failure to include a section on disarmament and non-proliferation in the outcome document did not occur in a vacuum. It was a consequence of the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, held recently in New York. At that Conference, the nuclear-weapon Powers were determined to forswear their commitments, and they declined to reaffirm the results of the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences.

The failure of disarmament conferences, particularly in the field of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), presages dire consequences for humankind. We can only hope that those setbacks will prompt us to work more seriously to face up to those perils and not to treat them lightly.

The issue of regional security is one of the important challenges on the First Committee's agenda this year; we must reaffirm its importance and strive to enhance it. We believe that regional security can be achieved through confidence-building and through joint efforts among Governments and States.

The Middle East is one of the most volatile regions of the world; given the strategic imbalances prevailing there, the double standards and the race to acquire different types of nuclear and conventional weapons, it is a region set to explode. The fact that the international community has turned a blind eye to Israel's development of a nuclear arsenal, that it has failed to demand that Israel cease its nuclear activities, and, worse still, that it has cooperated openly or secretly with it, has created an imbalanced and abnormal situation which has prompted others to follow suit. That course of action has exacerbated the instability and tension in the region. It simply is not right to impose international sanctions on some States and exempt others from them. That approach lacks credibility since it fails to apply the same standards to all States. We therefore stress the importance of eliminating all types of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We demand that no exceptions be made to that rule and that no State be given preferential treatment over others.

The dangers posed by WMDs should not lead us to underestimate the gravity of the proliferation of conventional weapons, such as small arms and light weapons, and landmines. They too constitute a threat to international peace and security. Imagine what could happen if they fell into the hands of criminal gangs or terrorist groups when States failed and their institutions ceased to function. Here, my delegation would like to express its appreciation for the work done by the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We recognize the Group's importance and acknowledge the strenuous efforts it made to arrive at a draft international political instrument that will definitely help both to diminish sources of illicit small arms and light weapons, and to trace and identify them.

Governments need to work on the basis of the principle of confidence-building in order to put an end to the arms race. Lack of confidence in and fear of others has long prompted States to rush to acquire the most sophisticated and lethal weapons. My delegation therefore believes that the best way to control the arms race is to work on resolving the protracted political problems that have been left to fester in the world, and to convince parties to conflicts to turn to dialogue and to speedily settle their differences by political means before the situation becomes exacerbated.

Mr. Kapoma (Zambia): My delegation would like to offer you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau, our congratulations on your election to oversee the work of the First Committee. My sincere appreciation also goes to your predecessor, Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba of Mexico, who presided over the First Committee during the fifty-ninth session.

Allow me at the outset to sincerely convey the condolences of my Government to the Government and the people of Indonesia on the loss of life and property at the hands of international terrorists, who planned and carried out an inhuman suicide attack in Bali on 2 October 2005. The people of Indonesia, and Bali in particular, have hardly recovered from the 2002 terrorist attack and therefore need the support of the international community. Zambia shares their sorrow and sense of loss.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statements delivered by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, by Nigeria on behalf of the African Union and by Botswana on behalf of the Southern African Development Community.

In his opening remarks before this Committee, on Monday, 3 October 2005, Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs,

summed up the current situation correctly when he said, "We meet at a particularly difficult and challenging moment for disarmament and non-proliferation. It is a time of heightened global anxiety about weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons" (*A/C.1/60/PV.2*).

I share the view of the Under-Secretary-General that it is the responsibility of the First Committee to use this session to promote and strengthen the various multilateral efforts to eliminate the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction to international peace and security.

My delegation shares the concern over the lack of progress in the multilateral disarmament machinery. For the eighth year going, the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and, recently, the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to achieve progress on their substantive agenda items. In addition, the final document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly did not include provisions for disarmament and non-proliferation. That inexcusable development poses a great danger to the current, highly charged international security structure.

My Government believes that the international community could break the impasse in disarmament negotiations with a strong recommitment to upholding multilateralism and working for multilaterally agreed solutions. It is therefore incumbent upon all experts on disarmament to recognize the symbiotic relationship between disarmament and non-proliferation. When there is little progress in general and complete disarmament, there is a corresponding likelihood of vertical proliferation. Hence, there is need for a careful balance between disarmament and non-proliferation.

Zambia reaffirms its support for disarmament and non-proliferation. As agreed by consensus in the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, general and complete disarmament in all its aspects is essential to strengthening international peace and security. The NPT depends on a careful balance of three equally important pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful application of nuclear science by all States, without discrimination.

It is our belief that negotiations on nuclear disarmament, undertaken in good faith, would act as catalysts in reaching agreement on other weapons systems. In other ways, Zambia welcomes innovations that will strengthen the confidence-building measures that helped to secure important disarmament successes, such as the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles and the first and second round of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks in the last century.

There is a need to reduce the highly disproportionate threats posed by hostile regimes and fanatic groups through an enhanced confidence-building regime. In other words, as disarmament experts, let us go back to the drawing board and alter the current mindsets that have brought the international community to a stalemate in arms control and disarmament.

My Government is aware of the destructive nature of small arms and light weapons on the stability of regions and countries. In that regard, multilateral efforts in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will serve humanity well. The adoption of an internationally binding instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons is a welcome development. It is our hope that the 2006 small arms Review Conference will further strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Anti-personnel mines are silent killers and should continue to deserve the collective attention of the international community. In that regard, I wish to call upon all States, international organizations and civil society to seize the opportunity of the forthcoming Sixth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction to accelerate the implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan. Working together, the international community can achieve the vision of a world free of anti-personnel mines.

Let me conclude by underscoring the fact that disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, is a key factor in enhancing international peace and security. Nuclear disarmament can trigger progress in other weapon systems, be they conventional, chemical, biological or bacteriological weapons.

Weapons of mass destruction can be effectively addressed by existing instruments in the field of disarmament. The proliferation of armaments, including nuclear arms, is a consequence of insecurity. A commitment to multilateralism by all States will effectively resolve, once and for all, the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Adamia (Georgia): At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as the Chairman of the First Committee. We are confident that, under your capable guidance, we will be able to achieve significant results in our work.

Regarding non-proliferation and disarmament issues, which represent a pillar of international security and peace, we attach particular significance to the 2005 United Nations summit and the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is unfortunate that the NPT Review Conference concluded its work without being able to reach an agreement on a substantial final document. Let me express deep regret over the lack of concrete measures and recommendations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in the outcome document of the 2005 world summit.

As we are discussing disarmament and security, I would like to draw attention to aggressive separatism as a major threat to international peace and security. Specifically, I would like to remind the Committee about so-called white spots, the conflict zones in two secessionist regions of Georgia — Abkhazia and the former autonomous region of South Ossetia. Both of those regions are undergoing an increasingly aggressive process of militarization. Most cynically, the separatist enclaves are receiving military shipments from our neighbouring country, the Russian Federation, through checkpoints along the Abkhazian and South Ossetian segments of the Georgian-Russian border, controlled exclusively by Russian border guards. As a result, quite a substantial amount of arms and ammunition, which are not controlled by the State and consequently are not reflected in the records of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, has accumulated in those territories.

Just recently, on 20 September 2005, South Ossetian separatists held a celebration of so-called independence of the self-styled Republic of South Ossetia and a military parade. That event provided a display of military detachments and armoured vehicles, including self-propelled howitzers, tanks, armoured personnel carriers, armoured combat vehicles, mortars, anti-aircraft guns, and so on. We consider that to be a violation of all peace agreements related to the conflict, as well as of provisions and principles of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, a cornerstone of European security.

Despite the Russian Federation's commitment to playing the role of principal mediator in the settlement of the conflict in South Ossetia, it continues to arm separatists, thus providing a fertile ground for the illicit smuggling of arms, as well as for the proliferation of dangerous materials.

The very existence of separatist regimes that are basically backed by Russian military and State institutions gives terrorist groups an opportunity to acquire arms and ammunition. We would like once again to underline that the process of the uncontrolled spread of armaments in those lawless territories represents a major threat to the stability of the entire region, above all because of their use by terrorists.

Everybody remembers last year's terrorist attack in Beslan. It is obvious that that tragic event could not have happened if the terrorists had been stopped at the checkpoints they passed, unhindered and in great numbers, on their way to Beslan. The only reason they were not stopped and properly checked was their statement that they were heading to South Ossetia. That is a shining example of how supporting separatism has a boomerang effect and ultimately winds up supporting terrorism.

Another terrorist attack in the town of Gori, Georgia, was undertaken by criminals who had been trained and equipped in the former South Ossetia by Russian special services. We have every evidence to confirm that. Is it not clear that such behaviour is directed not only against my country, but above all against Russia itself?

One more point of major concern to us is the illegal presence of the Russian military base in Gudauta, on the conflict territory of Abkhazia, Georgia. The base was to have been disbanded and withdrawn as long ago as 2001. Despite the Istanbul commitments and the obligations undertaken by the Russian Federation under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the military base is still

operating without the consent of Georgia, providing arms and military expertise to the separatist regime.

In fact, what is happening in the secessionist regions of Georgia is nothing less than annexation, which is simply the assertion of effective control though political, economic and military means over the territory of another State.

Regrettably, those facts, as well as similar developments that continue to arise in the conflict zones on the territory of Georgia, are outside the national and international disarmament and non-proliferation control mechanisms. But they remain basic problems that this Committee should address.

In that regard, I would like to reaffirm the full readiness of Georgia to cooperate with the international organizations, the United Nations first and foremost, in elaborating and applying special mechanisms aimed at dealing with territories and regimes that are beyond the control of the State. Particular attention should be drawn to the supporters of those enclaves, be they States, administrative regions, governmental institutions or private organizations.

We have raised those problems in this forum a number of times during earlier debates. Time and again, we have repeated that the problems that we face cannot be solved on the basis of double standards. The provisions of international law and the standards of inter-State relations should not vary depending on the size and military might of a particular State. They must be universal. Only thus can we achieve the goal of security and stability worldwide, and that is the main task of this very Organization.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): Allow me first to join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and, through you, the Bureau. I assure you of my delegation's full support for the successful outcome of our work.

Now is the time to review developments in the field of disarmament over the past year. In that respect, an objective analysis of its inadequate outcome is paramount. During our discussions last year, we were hopeful that 2005, being rich in global events in the disarmament field, would be a memorable year that would help advance international peace and security even further. However, the year did not deliver to the full of our expectations. In looking back, we see lost opportunities that could have elevated our discussions to a qualitatively different level. The Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) did not produce any substantive outcome. Despite the tremendous effort behind the Disarmament Commission, we were unable to agree on an agenda that would have enabled us to bring that body of utmost importance out of stalemate. Disarmament and non-proliferation, being fundamental pillars of international peace and stability, were left out of the outcome document of the 2005 summit.

At the same time, my delegation takes this opportunity to thank the group of seven countries, under the leadership of Norway, for its initiative on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, of which Armenia was very supportive.

We would be remiss, however, in not mentioning the significant results that 2005 did register. The International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism was adopted. Having signed that document at the world summit, Armenia demonstrated once again its unwavering adherence to the joint efforts of the international community in combating terrorism. Now we have to work on its full and universal implementation.

The outcome of the fourth round of the six-party talks on the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula just two weeks ago was also very encouraging.

Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) entered its implementation phase. Armenia has already presented its first report pursuant to the provisions of the resolution and is awaiting comments from the 1540 Committee.

We successfully concluded the negotiations over the international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. The instrument would become the next critical step in combating the illicit proliferation of those weapons, which pose a grave threat to millions of civilians in different parts of the world.

Once every session, Armenia reports to this body on the progress it has made in meeting its obligations under various international instruments in the field of disarmament. This year is no exception. Despite the fact that Armenia is not a signatory to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production

Convention on Nuclear Safety. Once again, Armenia would like to reiterate its commitment to continuing its collaboration with the IAEA in a transparent and open manner.

Armenia hopes that, during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, we will be able to collectively rise to the challenges ahead and impel the disarmament machinery out of stalemate in order more effectively to address emerging global security threats, to the benefit of increased and improved peace and security in the world. Armenia stands ready to make its contribution to that effect.

Mr. Ba'Omar (Oman) (spoke in Arabic): At the outset, Sir, allow me to extend warmest congratulations on behalf of my delegation upon your election as Chairman of this important Committee. Your presence as Chairman is an asset that will ensure the success of the work of the Committee. Rest assured of our full cooperation so that we can achieve the desired outcome.

I wish to take this opportunity also to express our thanks and appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his continued efforts to develop the necessary mechanisms for international cooperation in the field of disarmament. This was clearly demonstrated through his invaluable statement to the Committee.

The sixtieth session of the General Assembly is meeting in a critical international situation. Our concerns in this Committee relate to the failure to achieve the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the failure to secure the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The international community was also disappointed at the complete omission of disarmament issues from the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting held at the beginning of this session. The presence of such issues would have renewed the commitment of States, especially nuclear States, to the pledges they undertook during the Millennium Summit regarding disarmament issues.

My delegation is greatly concerned about the unstable security situation in the Middle East region, despite our considerable efforts to create an environment conducive to security and stability in the region by supporting all worthwhile efforts to eliminate all types of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). In

social and economic reintegration, so that Member States can live up to their obligations under the Convention.

Jordan was among the first to sign and ratify the Ottawa Convention. As a State party, we have taken effective steps to comply with its provisions. By March 2003, we had destroyed all our stockpiles of anti-personnel mines. It is our present hope that we may be able to satisfy our treaty obligations by May 2009. We are also currently playing an active role, together with our partners, in promoting the Ottawa Convention in our region and will continue to do so, as we attach great importance to achieving the universality of the Convention.

Jordan welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In line with our obligations under the resolution, we have submitted our reports on its implementation.

On the basis of our firm commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and of the need to address within the frameworks of the United Nations and through international cooperation consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law — the threat posed by terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons, Jordan welcomes the recent adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We also stress that one of the best safeguards and means for preventing weapons of mass destruction from reaching terrorist groups and non-State actors would be a comprehensive international convention on the issue. Moreover, it is important to recall that the most effective way to which to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction is to totally eliminate such weapons.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by assuring you of our full support and cooperation in bringing your work and the Committee's deliberations to a successful conclusion.

The Chairman: I should like to thank the representative of Jordan for her excellent editing of her statement in response to our appeal for brevity.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am sure that under your able chairmanship the Committee will have a successful session this year. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my felicitations to other members of the Bureau as well. Let me also associate my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

On the sixtieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the international community rightly expects progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects. However, the lack of progress towards achieving the total elimination of nuclear arsenals is a major source of international concern. The continuing existence of thousands of nuclear warheads in the stockpiles of nuclear-weapon States and the development of new types of nuclear weapons and of military doctrines for their use are threatening all of humanity more than ever before.

The failure of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the exclusion of a disarmament section from the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the High-level Plenary Meeting are setbacks for the 1978 goal of nuclear disarmament. The rejection of disarmament commitments, the resort to pre-emptive war in dealing with international issues, new military doctrines such as the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, which lowers the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons, plans to develop usable mini-nuclear weapons and, most recently, the 2005 Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, which explicitly extends the doctrine of pre-emptive war to create nuclear arsenals — all of these are alarming signs for international peace and security.

The international community must not allow the taboo against the threat or use of nuclear weapons, established since 1945, to be broken. After the end of the cold war, significant progress was made in the areas of arms control and disarmament. The conclusion of the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and of the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the 1995 indefinite extension of the NPT, together with the decisions and commitments aimed at nuclear disarmament and the agreements reached at the 2000 NPT Review Conference — particularly the 13 practical steps towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons — promised a brighter future for disarmament and non-proliferation.

However, since 2000, hopes have been gradually fading. A policy emerged from the United States of

rejecting international commitments and resorting to unilateral actions, and that country began to withdraw from multilateral treaties one by one. We should not lose sight of the fact that the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 were not the starting point. Indeed, the rejection of the CTBT, the blocking of the negotiations on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Protocol, the withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, the imposition of a certain decision on the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and similar attitudes concerning other international issues, such as the opposition to the Kyoto Protocol, all took place before 11 September 2001. The tragic event of 11 September merely served to accelerate that unilateral policy, and the invasion of Iraq in 2003 to pre-empt the so-called imminent threat of weapons of mass destruction was its climax.

Despite the sincere efforts and good intentions of a great majority of States parties from all corners of the world, the 2005 NPT Review Conference ended without result due to the policy of the same nuclear-weapon State. Just before the start of the NPT Conference, a high-ranking United States official announced that "Article VI [of the NPT] is just one sentence long". By that he meant to suggest that nuclear disarmament does not exist. He further argued that the unequivocal undertaking to achieve nuclear disarmament, made at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, belongs to the past.

That position was not only maintained throughout the Conference — and led it to failure — but also continued and extended through the negotiations on the General Assembly summit outcome document (resolution 60/1). In a position paper on the disarmament and non-proliferation section of the draft outcome document distributed by the United States delegation, all references to disarmament were deleted — except the title. That was a clear indication that the United States did not have the political will to reach an agreement on the disarmament section.

Furthermore, while 155 countries participated in the recent Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT in New York, the same nuclear-weapon State did not attend, owing to its ideological opposition to the CTBT. Meanwhile, it continues to work on plans to reduce the time necessary to resume nuclear tests and has allocated millions of dollars to that effort. Those actions seriously call into question that State's commitment to the moratorium on nuclear testing.

The actions and policies rigorously pursued by the United States without the slightest regard for the concerns of the rest of the international community clearly indicate what lies ahead if they remain unchecked. No wonder that country has been trying to throw up smokescreens at international forums: they are trying to deflect attention from their own record and actions by turning superficial concerns about the peaceful nuclear programmes of others into a politically charged debate.

While that nuclear-weapon State cries wolf over the risk of proliferation in cases involving peaceful nuclear activities of NPT member States whose facilities fall under full-scope IAEA safeguards, ironically it has itself concluded agreements for the transfer of all kinds of nuclear technology to non-parties to the NPT. In particular, I would mention its 2000 nuclear cooperation agreement with Israel — the only non-party to the NPT in the Middle East and one whose clandestine nuclear weapon facilities are in clear contravention of its own so-called non-proliferation strategy. By transferring nuclear-weapon technology to Israel and participating in other forms of nuclear sharing, the United States is not complying with its NPT obligations. These cases are clear evidence that the so-called proliferation concern over the peaceful nuclear activities of some countries is a mere pretext for pursuing political objectives and imposing a new nuclear apartheid.

The international community should firmly reject this discriminatory approach and should insist on the full implementation by States parties of all their commitments, particularly the unequivocal obligation of nuclear-weapon States to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The world community should take effective measures to prevent the development of new types of nuclear weapons, to stop nuclear sharing, to prohibit the threat of use of such inhumane weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and to renounce unlawful unilateral actions and policies.

Notwithstanding the failures in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, there has been some good progress on the CWC, on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and on small arms and light weapons. The destruction of chemical

weapons stockpiles is continuing under international inspection, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is functioning professionally. However, negotiations on issues such as how to implement article XI of the CWC need to be pursued more seriously. Discussion among States parties on ways and means to strengthen the BWC is also ongoing and the issue of a legally binding protocol is still on the table.

Perhaps one of the most promising items on the disarmament and arms control agenda has been the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Thanks to the leadership of Ambassador Thalmann of Switzerland and the flexibility shown by delegations, the Open-ended Working Group was able to finalize a draft international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons. Although the final results were not completely satisfactory to all delegations, and despite the valid reservations made by some countries, the conclusion of a draft instrument should be considered a step forward in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Any sound legal instrument should strike a balance between rights and obligations; this can guarantee the longevity of the legal regime by providing incentives for membership and compliance. The provisions of international disarmament instruments such as the CWC, the NPT and the IAEA Statute that relate to the right to access to peaceful technology as well as the imperative of cooperation and sharing of that technology among those that have accepted obligations testify to the wisdom and understanding of the drafters of those instruments. In none of those instruments is the inalienable right of States parties to peaceful technologies limited to specific areas. For instance, while States parties to the CWC undertake not to divert peaceful technologies and materials to prohibited activities, they are permitted access to all kinds of technologies, even scheduled chemicals that can be agents or precursors for chemical weapons may be produced for peaceful applications, but under strict verification regimes. A thorough study of the history of NPT negotiations clearly shows that the drafters of the Treaty never intended to limit the inalienable rights of the NPT States parties. The NPT stipulates the IAEA safeguards as an objective guarantee of the non-diversion to prohibited activities.

There is no justification whatsoever to limit the inalienable rights of the NPT States parties to the peaceful nuclear activities, including the fuel cycle. As reaffirmed in this Committee by the representative of the Non-Aligned Movement, each country's choices and decisions involving the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be respected without jeopardizing its policies or international cooperation agreements and arrangements for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, or its fuel-cycle policies. There is only one condition in the Treaty, and that is verification through the IAEA safeguards.

There were some attempts in the past to monopolize advanced technologies through the establishment of non-transparent and exclusive clubs such as the Australia Group, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime. But developing countries are developing particularly in the scientific field, and no nation can be stopped from advancement and progress.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a State party to the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, continues to comply with its obligations and to cooperate with the competent international organizations, as it has done in the past. No politically motivated decisions by a block of countries can prevent Iran from exercising its legal and legitimate rights.

The Chairman: I now invite the Permanent Observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to take the floor.

Ms. Filip (Inter-Parliamentary Union): For the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and its 141 member parliaments, arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation are all matters of great concern. As such, they figure high on the overall agenda of the organization, with at least five related resolutions adopted at IPU statutory assemblies, as well as two sessions of the annual parliamentary hearings at the United Nations devoted to those issues over the past three years.

The IPU was created more than a century ago first and foremost to promote dialogue and build confidence among parliamentarians from all corners of the world in order to prevent or defuse conflicts. Multilateralism is thus deeply ingrained in our way of looking at the world and the challenges that it faces. We believe that, through dialogue, it is possible to

move from a culture of violent response to one of mutual understanding and cooperation. As the closest link between the people of the world and their respective Governments, parliaments not only have a unique perspective to bring to bear on all issues on the international agenda, but also unique responsibilities to ensure that international law is applied within national borders and that commitments taken abroad are duly implemented and translated into action at the national level.

As parliaments are called upon to ratify international treaties, and through their oversight function make sure that those are effectively implemented, it is of crucial importance that parliaments themselves be well informed of and involved in the deliberative and negotiating process under way. Only then can it be expected that parliaments will actively pursue the ratification of international instruments, their early entry into force and translation into national legislation.

From our perspective, there is growing political awareness of and commitment to that process, as formulated by the speakers of parliaments when they assembled recently here in New York for their second world conference. On that occasion, they made a strong call for global security issues to be tackled more vigorously at the United Nations. Nuclear-weapon States should meet their obligations in the field of nuclear disarmament, and States must make new efforts in all areas of non-proliferation and arms control. In turn, parliaments should monitor more closely the national implementation of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament instruments and related United Nations resolutions, and engage in an exchange of information on best practices for such monitoring.

I have been asked to be brief, so in the speech that is being distributed, representatives will find more information regarding the type of work that the IPU and its member parliaments is conducting as regards the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, as well as in the field of small arms and light weapons.

The IPU is also encouraging parliaments to adopt appropriate national legislation to control the export of armaments of all types, most particularly focusing on items relating to weapons of mass destruction. That is part of a broader process seeking to enhance the democratic oversight of the security sector, including through a series of handbooks and guides, as well as through national and regional workshops and seminars intended to further build parliamentary capacities.

Terrorism constitutes perhaps one of the most tangible threats to the security of many nations today. The prospect of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists may turn into reality if we do not act urgently to close legal loopholes and to take concrete regulatory and law enforcement action on the ground.

A resolution adopted this spring in Manila at the 112th IPU Assembly calls on parliaments that have not yet ratified the 12 multilateral treaties on terrorism and the relevant regional instruments to do so expeditiously and to proceed from there to incorporate the provisions of those treaties into domestic legislation. After the agreement reached this year on the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, the IPU looks forward to seeing negotiations on the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism come to a successful conclusion this fall, pursuant to the commitment made in the 2005 world summit outcome document.

Like many in this room, our members are hopeful that a decision to convene an international conference for combating terrorism will be taken during this session of the General Assembly. They also share the view of many States Members of the United Nations that a precise definition of the nature and actual features of terrorism is indeed required. In that process, we are hopeful that the experience of the IPU in conducting intense political consultations and in actually identifying key elements of a definition of terrorism will be of assistance to the United Nations Member States.

As important as they are, international covenants do not represent an end in itself. To make peace or to keep the peace after the conclusion of hostilities, we need a more comprehensive assistance package for countries emerging from conflict, which would include training, monitoring, infrastructure and capacity-building for good governance. That is why we consider one of the greatest achievements of this year's world summit to be the constitution of a United Nations

peacebuilding commission. Parliaments play a key role in that transition process and serve as an important barometer of how healthy and sustainable post-conflict order really is. It is from that perspective that one of the upcoming sessions of the 2005 parliamentary hearing at the United Nations — to be held here at the end of this month — will be devoted to the mandate and working modalities of the future peacebuilding commission.

The IPU annual parliamentary hearing at the United Nations is an event that is attracting more and more interest from the international parliamentary community, as it provides an important opportunity for discussion and interaction on the main issues of the United Nations agenda, and we hope that many here will be able to join us on that occasion.

Finally, please allow me to conclude by recalling the action of the IPU as a strong advocate of gender parity in politics and decision-making, not only as a fundamental human right, but also as an effective way to bring about development and peace. We believe that women can bring a unique perspective to bear on all of those issues and make a decisive difference to their overall outcome. For the IPU, then, it is more than ever urgent to ensure that more women be included in all processes and forums promoting disarmament, arms control and international security. We look forward to the 27 October open debate in the Security Council on women and the promotion of peace as a significant opportunity to further mainstream that dimension into the work of the United Nations.

The Chairman: The Committee has heard the last speaker in the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items, and has thus concluded the first phase of its work on schedule. I thank all representatives for their cooperation.

Programme of work

The Chairman: In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, the First Committee will embark on the second phase of its work — the thematic discussion on item subjects, as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under the disarmament and international security agenda items — starting Monday, 10 October.

As I explained previously, there will be no formal list of speakers for the second phase of our work. I would, however, suggest that delegations inform the Secretariat, to the extent possible, of their plans to speak prior to the specific meetings. Otherwise, requests for all interventions will be taken directly from the floor on the given day. I would also urge all delegations to focus their comments on the specific subject that is being discussed at each meeting. In that connection, I would like to remind everyone that Monday and Tuesday have been allocated for the subject of nuclear weapons.

Allow me also to remind all delegations again that the deadline for submission of draft resolutions under all disarmament and international security agenda items is next Wednesday, 12 October, at 6 p.m. Delegations are strongly requested to submit their draft resolutions by the deadline in order to enable the Secretariat to make them available as official documents as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/60/PV.8

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

First Committee
8th meeting
Monday, 10 October 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Choi ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Natural disasters in South Asia and in Central America

The Chairman: On behalf of the First Committee, I would like to extend my most heartfelt condolences to the victims of the earthquake that occurred in South Asia over the weekend. I was horrified when I received the tragic news of the overwhelming disaster, and I am extremely shocked by the scale of casualties, particularly the tremendous loss of life in Pakistan. I earnestly hope that rescue operations will get to work in high gear to prevent further victims and to save lives and property in the affected region. I am confident that international solidarity and sympathy will be shown with the peoples and the Governments of the region.

I would also like to extend my deepest sympathy to the peoples and the Governments of Central America suffering from the passage of a hurricane just last week. Our deepest condolences go to the victims and their families in the region, particularly in Guatemala, where the death toll is the highest. It is my earnest wish that the international community will spare no effort to assist that region to make the earliest possible recovery.

Agenda items 85 to 105 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: In accordance with the programme of work and timetable, today the Committee will begin the second phase of its work, thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items.

In accordance with the decisions on the rationalization of the work of the First Committee, this stage of the Committee's work will combine the discussion of specific subjects with the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and draft decisions. As delegations will recall, document A/C.1/60/CRP.2, containing the timetable and subjects for the thematic discussions, was circulated and agreed upon last week.

As previously explained, the formal meetings during this second phase will each be divided into three segments so that the Committee can fully utilize the time allocated to it by engaging in productive discussions, and by introducing all draft resolutions in an efficient and timely manner. The first segment of some meetings will start with a guest speaker, as indicated in document A/C.1/60/CRP.2. After the

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speaker makes his or her opening statement, I will briefly suspend the formal meeting so that we can have an informal question and answer session with that guest speaker. Afterwards, we shall immediately resume the formal meeting and proceed to the second segment, which will consist of interventions by delegations on the subject under consideration. The last segment will be for the introduction of draft resolutions.

Furthermore, as I have already mentioned, there will be no formal list of speakers for this second stage of our work. However, delegations are welcome to inform the Secretariat of their plans to speak prior to the specific meetings. Otherwise, requests for all interventions will be taken directly from the floor on the given day.

Before proceeding with our work, I see that we have been joined today by our junior colleagues from the Disarmament Fellowship Programme. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to extend a warm welcome to them.

We shall now begin our thematic discussion on the issue of nuclear weapons. Since we do not have a guest speaker today, I will give the floor to delegations wishing to make interventions on this specific subject under consideration.

Mr. Freeman (United Kingdom): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and all the other countries that have aligned themselves with this statement.

I would like to start by joining the Chairman, on behalf of the European Union, in extending our deepest sympathy to all who have been affected in the tragic earthquake in Pakistan and in the flooding in Guatemala over the weekend. Furthermore, I hope that our colleagues the representatives of Pakistan and Guatemala will convey this message to their authorities.

The absence of any reference to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in the summit outcome document (resolution 60/1), the disappointing results of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, reflect a regrettable lack of convergency in analysing the challenges we are facing and the way they can be solved.

In our general statement, at the 2nd meeting, the European Union expressed our considerable disappointment at the lack of non-proliferation and disarmament language in the summit outcome document. However, we reiterated our support for a universal non-proliferation regime supported by a strong system of international safeguards and the NPT. The EU believes the prevention of nuclear proliferation and the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI of the NPT are essential for global peace and security.

The NPT is the cornerstone of this regime, based on three mutually reinforcing pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We believe it is as important today as it was when first agreed upon 35 years ago. The European Union will continue to preserve the integrity of the NPT by promoting all the objectives laid down in the Treaty in a structured and balanced manner, as identified and recorded in the European Union's Common Position that we adopted prior to the Review Conference, on 25 April this year.

We regret that this year's NPT Review Conference was unable to agree on a substantive final document to address the most pressing challenges to the Treaty. We see this as a missed opportunity. But the Conference did provide an opportunity to discuss practical ways to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to promote the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and other matters that we wish to see taken forward. Our conviction, as expressed in the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), is that a multilateral approach to non-proliferation provides the best means of countering this threat to international security.

The European Union continues to support the decisions and the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and will bear in mind the current situation. We note also that the final report of the 2005 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2005/57), which includes the programme of work adopted by consensus at the Conference, constitutes a reference for the future review process, in which the Union will engage on the basis of our Common Position. We also continue to work towards universal accession to the NPT and call on the 11 States not yet party to the NPT to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

I would take this opportunity to reaffirm comments made by the EU presidency in New York on 27 May that to contribute to a better operation of the NPT we should consider holding the first meeting of the preparatory committee for the next conference, in 2007, in Vienna.

The EU believes that the international safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is essential to the verification of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and to the success of this multilateral system. The EU considers that comprehensive safeguards agreements together with additional protocols constitute the current IAEA verification standard. We believe that these are the essential means for States parties to demonstrate that they are fulfilling their obligations under article III of the NPT. EU member States are also working towards making the additional protocol a condition of supply for nuclear exports.

Nuclear enrichment and reprocessing technologies are once again the subject of particular attention from the international community because of their dual-use nature. The EU believes it is important to encourage guarantees of access to nuclear-fuel-related services or to the fuel itself, under appropriate conditions. In this connection, the Union notes the Report of the IAEA Experts Group on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, published by the IAEA secretariat in February, and the need to start discussing it in the IAEA as soon as possible.

The European Union supports the suspension of nuclear cooperation with a State when the IAEA is unable to give sufficient assurances that that State's nuclear programme is intended exclusively for peaceful purposes. The suspension should continue until the Agency is able to provide those assurances. We also call for a strengthening of the role of the Security Council, as final arbiter of international peace and security, in order that it can take appropriate action in the event of non-compliance with NPT obligations.

As we outlined in our general statement, the Iranian nuclear programme continues to be a matter of grave concern for the European Union. The Union strongly supports the efforts of France, Germany and the United Kingdom, in association with the European Union's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, to find an acceptable agreement to rebuild international confidence in Iran's intentions. We recognize the inalienable right of NPT parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of the NPT. However, maintaining the balance between rights and obligations envisaged in the Treaty is essential. We believe it is incumbent on a non-compliant State to return to full compliance and to build the necessary confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear activities — in the specific case of Iran, through the suspension of fissile material production and enrichment-related activities. The resolution adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors on 24 September finding Iran non-compliant with its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty but deferring the report to the Security Council gives Iran an opportunity now to address the clear concerns of the international community.

The European side, for its part, is prepared to resume negotiations within the framework agreed upon between the Europeans and Iran last November. It is only when Iran demonstrates beyond any doubt that it is not seeking a nuclear weapons capability that it will be able to develop a better relationship with Europe and with the international community as a whole.

Again, as outlined in our general statement, the Union welcomes the joint statement by the participants in the six-party talks on 19 September and recognizes the hard work, flexibility and cooperation shown by participants. We note in particular the renewal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's commitment to abandon nuclear weapons and all existing nuclear programmes and its undertaking to return to the NPT. However, the EU considers the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear weapons programmes to be a serious violation of its commitments under the NPT, its International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards Agreement, the Agreed Framework between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Joint North-South Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We continue to deplore the stated intention of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to withdraw from the NPT and urge the adoption of measures to deal with withdrawal from the Treaty. We look forward to early implementation of those commitments and to the establishment of effective verification arrangements. The EU has supported the

six-party talks throughout and remains ready to assist in whatever way we can.

At the NPT Review Conference earlier this year we highlighted the possible implications of a withdrawal from the NPT for international peace and security. We believe that measures to discourage withdrawals from the Treaty are urgently needed and should be adopted in the NPT context.

The European Union believes that we must do everything possible to prevent possible access by terrorists to nuclear weapons or materials that could be used in radiological devices. The illicit trade related to WMDs, in particular in highly sensitive nuclear equipment and technology, is of serious concern.

We must be united in a common endeavour to strengthen the non-proliferation regime by closing existing loopholes. The Union is committed to strong national and internationally coordinated export controls to complement our obligations under the NPT. The EU supports the strengthening of the Nuclear Suppliers Group guidelines, and urges the Group and the Zangger Committee to share their experience to expand controls to meet new non-proliferation challenges.

Security Council resolution 1540 clearly places a crucial role in developing an effective mechanism of prevention and counter-proliferation of WMDs and their means of production and delivery by or to State actors and non-State actors worldwide. The resolution calls, inter alia, upon all States to co-ordinate with their national legal authorities and legislation and consistent with international law, as may appropriate, action to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials. We urge States to promote this cause with. The EU is willing to offer its assistance in implementing the provisions of the resolution. We are ready to provide assistance in building legal and administrative infrastructure, sharing our experience of implementation and training respective national authorities.

The EU supports and encourages States to participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and the Global Threat Reduction Initiative. We particularly encourage early ratification of the amendments to the Convention on Physical Protection agreed upon the diplomatic conference that took place in Vienna in July. We emphasize the importance of the security of nuclear materials and installations and call on all States to ensure that effective arrangements for protection are in place.

In our general statement we set out our continued support for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and welcomed the reduction of strategic and operationally nuclear weapons and their delivery systems since the end of the cold war. We stress the need for an overall reduction of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, in particular by those with the largest arsenals. In this context we encourage the application of the principle of irreversibility to guide all measures in the field of nuclear disarmament and arms control as a contribution to the maintenance of international peace, security and stability, taking these conditions into account. We are actively efforts to secure transparency as a confidence-building measure.

The ongoing stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament is a matter of increasing concern. We are convinced that the new impetus be found and security issues that are mandated by consensus. The EU is strongly committed to ensuring a commencement of work in the Conference and welcomes the fact that new ideas have been put forward over the past few years. We appreciate those efforts aimed at promoting consensus on a programme of work. We support the efforts of the presidency in this connection to that end.

The EU attaches special importance to the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes or as a means to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We call upon for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of a non-discriminatory, universally applicable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in accordance with the mandate contained in the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein.

Pending entry into force of the said treaty, the EU calls on all States to declare and uphold a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The EU welcomes the action of those of the five nuclear-weapon States that have declared this moratorium.

We recognize the importance, from the point of view of nuclear disarmament, of the programmes for the destruction and elimination of nuclear weapons and the elimination of fissile material as defined under the Group of Eight (G-8) Global Partnership.

The European Union believes that entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as soon as possible is a further essential part of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We call on all States, particularly those listed in annex 2 of the Treaty, to sign and ratify this Treaty without delay and without preconditions. Pending its entry into force, we call on all States to abide by a moratorium and to refrain from any action contrary to the obligations and provisions of the CTBT. We highlight the importance of the work of the CTBT Organization Preparatory Commission, and we actively support the work of the Special Representative of the States that have ratified the Treaty in his work promoting universal accession.

The CTBT requires a fully functioning verification regime by entry into force, to provide assurance that all States are complying with their Treaty obligations. The European Union is, therefore, particularly encouraged by the good progress made in establishing the International Monitoring System. The System is unprecedented in its technological scope and global coverage. Its detection capabilities already represent a significant deterrent to any would-be testers of nuclear weapons. Development of on-site inspections, which are an essential part of the verification regime, also continues to make progress.

While we emphasize that the primary purpose of the verification system of the CTBT is to verify compliance with the Treaty, we also support the continuing development of civil and scientific benefits of the system. If data from the verification technologies can mitigate the humanitarian consequences of certain natural disasters and save lives — and we have seen instances of that very recently indeed — we have a moral responsibility to make them available to disaster warning organizations. Furthermore, we believe that exploiting the important additional scientific knowledge offered by the verification system will encourage States to access these further benefits by signing and ratifying the Treaty.

We urge the international community to work for the resolution of regional instability and insecurity and of conflict situations that are often at the root of all armament programmes, including the development of nuclear weapons programmes. The Union continues to attach great importance to the development of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones based on arrangements freely arrived at between the States of the region concerned, to foster regional peace and security and to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, stability and confidence. We welcome ratification by the nuclear weapon States of relevant protocols following the necessary consultations. The EU recognizes the ongoing value of the existing security guarantees that are legally binding and made in the context of such protocols. We hope outstanding issues concerning nuclear weapon-free zones can be resolved, through full consultation, in accordance with United Nations guidelines and with the agreement of all parties involved.

The EU also underlines the importance of controls on all weapons of mass destruction, both nuclear and other, and their means of delivery, encouraged in Security Council resolution 687 (1991). We call upon all States in the Middle East to establish an effectively verifiable zone free of nuclear weapons, as well as of other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

I should, before closing my remarks, use this opportunity to extend congratulations to the International Atomic Energy Agency and to its Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, on the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize. The award is a tribute to the significance attached to the work of the IAEA.

Mr. Zhang Yan (China) (spoke in Chinese): At the outset, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I would like to express our condolences to the South Asian States of Pakistan, India and Afghanistan on the suffering they are enduring in the aftermath of the earthquake that occurred last weekend.

The end of the cold war and a new security situation have made it possible for us to achieve a substantial reduction in nuclear weapons and to aspire to the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of such weapons. Moving the nuclear disarmament process ahead, and constantly reducing the role of nuclear weapons in international political affairs and national security policies, are two items of great significance for improving the international security environment and promoting the nuclear non-

proliferation process. In that respect, nuclear weapon States bear special and primary responsibilities. It is unacceptable to hold onto a cold war mentality, advocate a pre-emptive strategy, list other countries as targets for nuclear strike, lower the threshold for using nuclear weapons or develop new types of nuclear weapons for specific purposes.

It is regrettable that the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to achieve substantial results. However, as the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, the NPT will continue to play an indispensable role in preventing the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, reducing the threat of nuclear weapons and maintaining global peace and security.

China will sincerely, faithfully implement all its obligations under the NPT and commits itself to enhancing the universality, effectiveness and authority of the Treaty and to promoting, in a comprehensive and balanced manner, the three goals of the NPT: nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We will continue to take an active and constructive part in the NPT review process.

As a nuclear weapon State, China has never ceased to fulfil its responsibilities and obligations in nuclear disarmament. China has always stood for the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons. Since the very day it came into possession of nuclear weapons, China has undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or in any circumstances and has undertaken unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States or nuclear weapon-free zones.

China has always honoured this commitment. In a period during the cold war era, when we were faced with the nuclear threat or nuclear blackmail, or in the post-cold war period, when we witnessed dramatic changes in the international security situation, China's policy in this respect will remain unchanged in the future.

China maintains that the following measures should be taken to further promote the nuclear disarmament process. An international legal instrument on the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons should be concluded at an early date.

Nuclear disarmament should follow a just and reasonable process of gradual reduction towards a downward balance. The two States possessing the largest nuclear arsenals bear special and primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament. They should earnestly comply with the nuclear non-proliferation treaties already concluded and should further reduce their nuclear arsenals in a verifiable and irreversible manner, so as to create conditions for achieving the ultimate goal of complete and thorough nuclear disarmament.

Until the goal of the complete, prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons is achieved, nuclear-weapon States should commit themselves not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and should undertake unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States or nuclear weapon-free zones.

Nuclear-weapon States should abandon the policy of nuclear deterrence based on first use of nuclear weapons and should reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security.

Nuclear disarmament measures, including interim measures, should follow the guidelines of maintaining a global strategic balance and stability and undiminished security for all.

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should reach agreement on its programme of work at an early date, enabling it to establish ad hoc committees on nuclear disarmament, negative assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, a fissile material cut-off treaty and prevention of an arms race in outer space, and to start substantive work on these issues.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including nuclear weapons, and their means of delivery poses a great threat to international peace and security. Preventing WMD proliferation is a pressing task facing the international community. The ultimate goal of non-proliferation efforts is to maintain international and regional peace, security and stability. In order to prevent WMD proliferation, an integrated approach should be adopted to address both its symptoms and its root causes. In this regard, we would like to make the following points.

Force should be avoided in settling international disputes and regional security

with their obligations and commitments under the NPT. Nuclear-weapon States should take seriously the commitments made to date by nearly all countries to renounce the option of nuclear armament under the NPT regime, recalling the decisions and resolutions of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the Final Documents of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which demonstrate the readiness of States parties to fulfil their pledges regarding nuclear disarmament.

The efforts of nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals should be duly appreciated. Japan highly values the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, which should serve as a step for further reductions in the number of Russian and United States strategic nuclear warheads. Japan encourages the Russian Federation and the United States to work towards the Treaty's full implementation and to consider building on the Treaty to realize further reductions by negotiating a new framework for the future, not an end in itself.

Japan also calls upon all nuclear-weapon States to take further steps leading to nuclear disarmament, including deeper reductions in all types of nuclear weapons, and calls on all States not to act in any way that could lower the nuclear threshold in this regard. Japan emphasizes the importance of applying the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in the process of working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The danger of undermining the NPT regime also exists outside the framework. States remaining outside the NPT that are developing or are suspected of developing nuclear weapons risk sending an erroneous message to NPT States parties suggesting there are benefits to remaining outside the Treaty. Those States that are parties to the NPT should bear in mind their principal responsibility as members of the international community to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Japan joins other States parties in continuing to call upon States not parties to the NPT to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States without delay and without conditions and, pending their accession, to refrain from acts that would defeat the object and purpose of the NPT and to implement practical measures towards disarmament and non-proliferation.

Japan welcomes the fact that at the fourth round of the six-party talks an agreement was reached on a joint statement indicating the final goal to be achieved by the talks. Japan highly appreciates the efforts made by the countries concerned, in particular China, as coordinator. The peaceful resolution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue is an urgent security matter for Japan. That country's commitment, for the first time, to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a verifiable manner will provide important groundwork for achieving the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula through the six-party talks in the future. Japan takes serious note of the decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We consider it important for the six parties to implement the agreement promptly and steadily, and believe that constructive dialogue should be promoted to that end. Although difficulties may lie ahead before the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is achieved, Japan intends to do its utmost to realize the common goal of achieving peace and stability in North-East Asia by maintaining close cooperation with the countries concerned.

On 24 September, the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) adopted a resolution finding Iran in non-compliance with the IAEA Safeguards Agreement, and urged it to further cooperate with the IAEA, as well as to re-establish the suspension of its uranium-enrichment-related and reprocessing activities. The adoption of that resolution sent a clear message from the international community to Iran, and Japan values it as an important step towards resolving the issue through negotiations. Japan strongly urges Iran to respond to the resolution by sincerely implementing the requirements of all relevant IAEA reports, including the suspension of all its uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities without exception, including uranium conversion activities, and calls on Iran to return to the negotiation process with the three European Union parties.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an important issue because the attitude of the nuclear-weapon States affects the reliability of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The early entry into force of the CTBT continues to be at the top of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. We welcome the Final Declaration of the Fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty, convened here in New York last month, which calls upon all States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the

Treaty without delay. We sincerely hope that, in particular, the remaining 11 Annex 2 countries will heed the call of the international community and become Treaty ratifiers. We continue to support the steady reinforcement of the CTBT verification regime in order to maintain momentum for the Treaty's entry into force. A moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions should be maintained pending the entry into force of the Treaty.

The immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and the early conclusion of such a treaty was agreed to in 1995 and 2000. The treaty would be an essential building block towards the total elimination of nuclear arsenals and would also contribute to the prevention of nuclear proliferation by globally banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and by enhancing transparency and accountability in the management of such materials through its verification system.

Japan welcomes the fact that the United States made clear in its statement last week here in the First Committee its intention to support the early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Japan believes that the verification of such a treaty is necessary and feasible. However, our priority is to start negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament without preconditions, rather than prolonging discussions on the mandate. We should not prejudge the outcome of the negotiations. Japan calls upon all nuclear-weapon States and States not party to the NPT to declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons pending the entry into force of the Treaty.

Japan congratulates the IAEA and its Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, on the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize. Today, the world recognizes that the threat of proliferation and the importance of the role of the IAEA in that field have never been greater. Japan intends to continue to support the IAEA's activities so that it can accomplish its important mission as the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Japan believes that achieving universal adherence to IAEA additional protocols is the most realistic and effective means of enhancing the nuclear non-proliferation regime, as it can ensure that there is no undeclared nuclear material or activities in States. While noting the increasing number of countries which have signed or ratified such protocols, Japan calls on all States that have not yet signed and ratified one to do so. In this regard, the capability of the IAEA in terms of its safeguards activities must be enhanced.

Finally, I would like to introduce a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament, which is being submitted to the First Committee by Japan. Inspired by strong national sentiment calling for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, Japan, as the only nation in the world to have suffered atomic bombings, has annually since 1994 submitted draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament, which have enjoyed overwhelming support from the international community. On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the atomic bombings, as well as of the establishment of the United Nations, we have decided to revise and resubmit our previous draft resolutions so as to create a concise and strong draft resolution. The international community must overcome the lack of consensus that was apparent in this year's NPT Review Conference and General Assembly sessions. To that end, Japan hopes that all countries, including the nuclear-weapon States, regardless of any differences in positions, will unite and support our draft resolution with a view to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Lastly, I would like to express my deep condolences to the families of the victims of the earthquake that took place at the weekend in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): I would like, through you, Mr. Chairman, to express our heartfelt condolences to the delegations of Pakistan and of India on the tragedy that has befallen their peoples in connection with the earthquakes that have taken so many lives and caused so much damage to property. I also extend condolences to the delegation of Guatemala in connection with the losses sustained in the country as a result of the floods.

We are discussing the issue of nuclear weapons today against the backdrop of the successive failures over the past couple of years, and particularly in 2005. It is generally believed — and there is a modicum of truth in it — that success in nuclear disarmament does not hinge on technical issues, but is a matter of political will. We therefore need stronger political will and more innovative thinking in order to move forward on that score.

The failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a matter of great concern for all of us. We have missed out on a great opportunity to chart our future course of action to save the world from the scourge of the continued existence and the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. That should not have happened.

However, we believe that our disagreements during Review Conference have not in any way weakened our achievements in 1995 and 2000. Those decisions were adopted by consensus. We cannot now simply walk away from those commitments and obligations. We must implement what we have agreed upon, particularly the 13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive implementation of article VI of the NPT. These 13 steps continue to be the performance benchmark for the disarmament process.

It is a matter of great concern for us that deliberations in the Conference on Disarmament — the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations — have been stalled for years on end. We therefore once again call for the Conference to resume its substantive work in line with the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

We need to strengthen our efforts to address both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We can do so through the resumption in the Conference on Disarmament of negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

We also need to agree on the agenda of the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission as soon as possible.

It has been a decade since we adopted the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), banning nuclear explosions in any environment. It is a matter of deep regret that the Treaty has yet to enter into force. We call upon the remaining 11 annex 2 States, whose ratification is essential for that purpose, to adhere to the Treaty as soon as possible. The entry into force of the CTBT would be the most powerful step towards achieving our desired goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We participated in the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) held recently in New York to express our continued support for the work towards the universalization of the CTBT.

We are convinced that that nuclear weapon States have made little progress in eliminating their nuclear arsenals to lead to nuclear disarmament. The destruction of some old nuclear warheads has been overshadowed by the upgrading of remaining warheads with more precision in targeting. There are efforts as well to develop new types of nuclear weapons. These developments will buttress war-fighting capabilities and enhance the propensity for use. That will be extremely destabilizing. In addition, if the possession of nuclear weapons appears to strengthen the sense of security, their acquisition will become attractive. If some have them and appear to benefit, others will want them also. That is simple logic but incontrovertible nonetheless.

We therefore call upon the nuclear-weapon States to take concrete steps to reduce their nuclear arsenals as well as to refrain from developing new types of nuclear weapons. They should act in accordance with their commitment to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, the use of such weaponry in their security policies.

Bangladesh has consistently and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. Bangladesh is the first among 2 nations in South Asia to have ratified the CTBT. We are also a party to the NPT. We have concluded safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, including an additional protocols.

We believe that regional disarmament arrangements can play a significant role in global nuclear disarmament. We welcome all existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and call for the establishment of similar zones in South Asia, in the Middle East and in other parts of the world.

The greatest threat to humankind comes from the continued existence of nuclear weapons. It is our conviction that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their possible use or threat of use. It is from that viewpoint that we underline the categorical imperative of the

principles of irreversibility and transparency for all nuclear disarmament measures and the need to develop further adequate and efficient verification capabilities. Moreover, there can be no greater peril to the world than cheating on nuclear issues. That is an irrefutable axiom on which there can be no debate.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and through you all the delegations that have formally or informally conveyed their sentiments of sympathy and support for the victims of the earthquake that struck Pakistan, other parts of South Asia and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, Pakistan was hit the hardest. Right now, as I speak, rescue and relief operations are continuing at full speed. The national machinery has been fully harnessed into that effort. International humanitarian assistance has been timely and swift. We are touched by the spontaneous and sincere outpouring on behalf of the people of Pakistan. We would like to convey our profound gratitude to all Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations for their help and assistance.

The loss of life in Pakistan has been massive. Whole villages and townships are heaps of rubble. Infrastructure has been damaged and disrupted over vast, and now inaccessible, territories. Even as we grapple with the immediate relief operations, we are preparing ourselves for rehabilitation and reconstruction. We will appreciate the international community's continued solidarity with us as we move into that difficult phase.

I turn now to the subject of our thematic debate. By now we are familiar with the malady. What we need is the correct prescription. The question before us is how to rectify the situation. One way is to indulge in a subtle, or not so subtle, blame game. The other way is to look at existing and emerging threats and issues relating to disarmament and non-proliferation and to try to understand their correlation in an objective setting. Let us try to assess if a new security architecture is emerging that is supported by a new infrastructure. What are its implications for the core objectives of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy?

We must start from reality. The global security architecture is undergoing profound change. The consensus dating back to the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which seemed to be developing in the post-cold-war period, is not holding well. The existing consensus has been characterized as a relic of the past. There are varying approaches and perspectives on dealing with disarmament and non-proliferation. The consensus underpinning disarmament and non-proliferation has eroded, and the multilateral disarmament machinery has been weakened. That opens the way for unilateral, discriminatory or coercive approaches.

The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) ended on what one may euphemistically call a strategic pause. Negotiations on the 2005 substantive outcome document broke down because of prevalent and divergent security interests. The erosion of consensus may create a vacuum that will be dangerous for peace and stability, especially in regions of tension. Nature abhors a vacuum.

In his address to the General Assembly on 14 September, President General Pervez Musharraf called for a new consensus to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation. I shall try to elaborate on that proposal in several brief points.

That consensus should be promoted through consultations and agreement among all Member States, not just among a self-selected — even if well-meaning — group of countries.

There should be equal security for all States on the basis of the fundamental premise in the Charter of the United Nations that security is the right of every State and the fact that the Declaration of the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2, section III) itself adopted the principle of equal security for all States.

Such security should be promoted multilaterally and not through national means or willing coalitions of groups, no matter how powerful.

We must address the underlying motives that drive States to acquire weapons of mass destruction, which include threats posed by superior conventional or non-conventional forces, the existence of disputes and conflicts with more powerful States and discrimination in the application of international norms and laws.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) multiplies the threat of the possible use of such weapons. Proliferation can be controlled only if

our efforts are accompanied by a parallel effort to realize WMD disarmament.

Discrimination and asymmetric possession of WMDs will not ensure non-proliferation or regional or global stability. Nor are technology constraints a durable answer, unless the motives for proliferation are addressed.

We must address the new threat of terrorists acquiring WMDs. Again, that can succeed only through collective and cooperative measures, not through coercion and discrimination.

A new security consensus should take into account the need to address existing and emerging global challenges to regional and international security. That goal can be achieved through the Conference on Disarmament or a special session of the Disarmament Commission.

With regard to a vehicle to develop the new consensus — or at least to begin to do so — we have proposed that the Chairperson of the First Committee could hold open-ended informal consultations. That could be a salutary build-up to the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

I should now like to refer to the challenges that exist in the four core issues.

With regard to disarmament, I should like to underscore the slow pace of disarmament, and the credence and acknowledgement that should be given to the measures being undertaken and the continued commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under globally agreed conditions.

In the area of fissile material, the question we have to answer is whether a cut-off treaty will be verifiable or non-verifiable. That is where we are stuck at the moment, and that is what we must unstick.

We have to sort out the question of linkages between the four core issues. These linkages, in the context of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, are not artificial, contrived or extraneous. They are anchored in history and substance.

There is a need to reconcile nuclear reality within the global non-proliferation regime. That is, the existence of eight, not five, nuclear-weapon States.

With regard to the programme of work, the five ambassadors' proposal is good enough. It has distilled all the proposals on the table. Diplomacy is the art of the possible. These are the minimum credible desiderata which we have on the table. If we want to commence work, we can do so without preconditions.

There is nothing wrong with the existing machinery. It needs to be fully utilized for the specific role assigned to each of its constituents.

I close my remarks by reiterating our proposal that we ought to be working for a new synthesis, a new consensus. We should do so sincerely, earnestly and, I must say, effectively.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): Let me first join others in extending our deep condolences and sympathy with regard to the victims of the natural disasters in South Asia and Central America.

As we noted during our opening statement (see A/C.1/60/PV.2), the First Committee is meeting at a very troubled time for multilateral nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. In his statement to the General Assembly last month (see A/60/PV.18), Canada's Foreign Minister deplored the fact that the United Nations world summit outcome (resolution 60/1) did not contain a single paragraph on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Regret was also expressed regarding the failure of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to come to an agreement on a substantive outcome at the Review Conference in May. In both cases, the inability to reach a consensus stymied the attempts of the many to make progress in achieving long-standing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals.

Here in this forum of the First Committee, however, the large majority of States may demonstrate their commitment to the principles of the NPT without the limitations caused by the need for unanimity. While the membership of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has steadily grown to 176 signatories, and while its international monitoring system continues to be built up into a modern verification regime with global reach, the Treaty's legal entry into force remains frustratingly out of reach. At the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT held last month, the ratifiers of the Treaty agreed on a Final Declaration that reiterated their continued support for the Treaty

and made recommendations on how to gain the ratifications of the remaining 11 annex 2 States.

We are pleased that the Final Declaration included the Canadian proposal that calls on States in a given region to consider ratifying the CTBT in a coordinated manner. In recent years, Canada noted in its deliberations with many non-ratifiers that regional security dynamics tend to be a strong impediment to ratification for some countries. Our proposal sought to address one of the most common objections to ratification by such States, in the light of those realities: "Why should I ratify when others in the region refuse to do so?" By agreeing to ratify simultaneously, both annex 2 and non-annex 2 States in a given region can help build security and confidence in regions that suffer all too often from insecurity and uncertainty.

While the CTBT is being implemented provisionally as it awaits entry into force, other disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms that would bolster the NPT regime, such as a fissile material cut-off treaty, remain to be negotiated. Turning off the tap of fissile material production for nuclear weapons is a pressing priority on which no forward movement has been registered at least since the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which called for completion of such a treaty within five years.

The Conference on Disarmament had been given a specific negotiating mandate by the 2000 Review Conference, which it has unfortunately failed to realize, due to continued gridlock over a programme of work. Canada has stated its willingness to be flexible on the precise mandate for negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty as part of a compromise package on a programme of work for the Conference. We continue to urge other Conference members to display equal flexibility in our collective efforts to break the deadlock that has persisted for far too long. The integrity and viability of the NPT depend on continuing strong momentum in nuclear weapons reductions. There can be no going back to the nuclear arms race of the twentieth century. Since the 1980s a number of nuclear-weapon States have made significant and welcome progress in reducing their nuclear arsenals.

All nuclear-weapon States have a responsibility to ensure that their actions and pronouncements continue to be compatible with a progressive and consistent movement towards nuclear disarmament. Doctrinal or policy references that give the impression that nuclear weapons are being accorded increased importance in respective security policies are anathema to disarmament efforts. We encourage all nuclear-weapon States to securely reduce and dismantle their nuclear weapons arsenals with a maximum degree of transparency. We continue to call on those outside the NPT to join this core Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

The integrity and viability of the NPT also depend on States parties fulfilling their non-proliferation commitments. The right of a State to develop fuel cycle technology must be considered in the context of its NPT nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Iran must satisfactorily address the case of its non-compliance, which has been documented by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Until all outstanding questions have been resolved, we believe Iran must maintain the suspension of all its uranium enrichment-related activities. The resumption of conversion is a breach of the Paris agreement with the three European Union countries and ignores successive IAEA resolutions. In view of the recent IAEA Board of Governors resolution finding Iran in non-compliance, Canada believes that the IAEA must report the issue to the Security Council at the earliest opportunity.

Canada welcomes the agreement reached at the six-party talks towards resolving nuclear proliferation concerns on the Korean peninsula. We urge all parties to follow through on their commitments without delay and to build upon this agreement at the next round of talks in order to ensure a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons once and for all.

Finally, Canada welcomes the recent announcement that the IAEA and its Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2005. A founding member of the IAEA, Canada is a major participant across the full spectrum of its activities and served this past year as Chair of its Board of Governors. A deserving recipient of that prestigious award, Mr. ElBaradei has demonstrated capable leadership on a host of difficult non-proliferation and disarmament issues of concern to Canada and the world, including North Korea, Iran, Iraq and the strengthening of nuclear safeguards agreements under the NPT. The Agency makes a major contribution to international peace and security through

its verification and safeguards activities, and Canada congratulates the Agency and Mr. ElBaradei on this historic occasion.

Mr. Costea (Romania): Allow me to join previous speakers in expressing condolences and sympathy with regard to the natural disasters in South Asia and in Guatemala. As a country that has been hit by six consecutive waves of floods within the past year alone, we know only too well what it means to live through such a disaster.

Our position on the topic under discussion today was fully reflected in the statement made earlier by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union. Consequently, I shall focus on several particular aspects.

Very often this year, in various settings — including last week during the general debate of the First Committee — we have heard bleak assessments of the current status of disarmament and non-proliferation, especially in the nuclear field. We fully share these concerns, which are caused by the repeated failures of the international community to take common, consensual action against the nexus of old and new threats to global peace and security. The seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Disarmament Commission, the world summit, the Conference on Disarmament — all of those represent missed opportunities to strengthen the multilateral norms and measures aimed at furthering nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

Romania joined the cross-regional initiative launched by Norway in an attempt to contribute concrete proposals on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for inclusion in the summit outcome document. We were and are encouraged by the support received, although it was not enough to bridge the still-too-divergent positions and priorities of the entire United Nations membership.

We are of the view that as we design new mechanisms to respond effectively to our century's challenges, the existing ones must also be reinforced. We believe that they are complementary, not competing. Therefore, Romania attaches particular importance to the Proliferation Security Initiative and to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), and we welcome the recent opening for signature of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

At the same time, we continue to devote attention to the implementation of obligations under the NPT and of the decisions adopted at the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences. We took note of last week's updates on Article VI implementation by the United States — which recently completed the deactivation of its entire force of Peacekeeper intercontinental ballistic missiles, in accordance with its obligations under the 2002 Moscow Treaty — and by the Russian Federation, which since 1991 has achieved a fivefold reduction in its aggregate nuclear weapon stockpiles and a fourfold reduction in the number of its non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Romania has always viewed nuclear disarmament from a pragmatic perspective, owing to the gradual nature of the process and to its numerous political and strategic implications, particularly at the global level. That is why, among several steps still to be taken to accomplish the non-proliferation and disarmament agenda, we consider the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or for other nuclear explosive devices to be a matter of urgency. In the meantime, we urge all States, regardless of their status, to impose a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

We are pleased to note the high level of support — expressed this year at Geneva but also currently in the First Committee — for the commencement of negotiations on such a treaty at the Conference on Disarmament. In our opinion, that is an achievable and realistic goal for the next session of the Conference, especially at a time when it will be marking 10 years since the completion of its last negotiating session.

We look forward to an interactive and fruitful debate.

Mr. Muhumuza Laki (Uganda): As I am taking the floor for the first time, my delegation would like to avail itself of this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Committee. I want to assure you and your team of our support for successful deliberations on the matters at hand.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements made at earlier meetings by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Last year, many delegations, including my own, expressed regret at the continued lack of tangible progress in the area of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We had hoped that there would be positive movement and that we would be addressing other related issues to enhance the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation. Unfortunately, we seem to have gone back to the drawing board, with the important questions of the day still unanswered.

We call for the complete prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons, which today pose the greatest threat to international peace and security. We must act to see to it that such weapons should fall into the hands of terrorists. We believe that the only way to guarantee that terrorists will never gain possession of weapons of mass destruction is to ensure that such weapons do not exist in the first place.

Uganda deplores the dumping of hazardous wastes off the coast of Somalia and calls upon the culprits to clean up their mess. It is deplorable that those who would be counted upon for assistance are instead taking advantage of a distressing situation, in collusion with some warlords, to secure permission to dump these hazardous wastes. A toxic nuclear dump can very easily serve as an arsenal for terrorists in their quest for weapons of mass destruction. That threat is very real, considering that terrorist acts require small quantities that could be recycled very easily from toxic stockpiles.

Uganda is a strong proponent of multilateralism. As such, we cherish the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the appropriate forum for the discussion of disarmament issues. It is therefore deplorable that the Conference on Disarmament failed to agree on a programme of work as a valuable time was wasted on non-issues of form rather than addressing issues of substance.

The fact that the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) did not make any pronouncements on disarmament matters does not mean that those issues are resolved. My delegation regards this as a temporary setback from which we hope to rebound with renewed determination, because we are all too well aware of the relationship between disarmament and development. We look forward to the time when we can all be beneficiaries of the disarmament dividend.

Lastly, I should like to express our sympathy to the delegations of India, Pakistan and Guatemala on the catastrophic losses suffered as a result of earthquakes, flooding and landslides.

On a positive note, my delegation applauds the Nobel Committee for awarding this year's Nobel Peace Prize to the International Atomic Energy Agency, together with its Director General. That is an important achievement for the Agency as well as for Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei. Perhaps the best form of recognition for the IAEA and Mr. ElBaradei would be to ensure that the disarmament community fulfils one of its cardinal objectives: disarmament. When that is accomplished, we can say that the Nobel Laureates' efforts will have been appropriately rewarded.

Mr. MacLachlan (Australia): At the outset I would like to echo the sentiments of others and extend my delegation's sympathies to the delegations, the Governments and the peoples of India and Pakistan regarding the terrible events that occurred over the weekend.

Australia regrets the lack of a substantive outcome from the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), but we will continue to work to strengthen the NPT in the face of the challenges confronting that essential pillar of the global security architecture.

Much is made of the bargain between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States in the NPT. Australia has long supported practical efforts towards nuclear disarmament, and for that reason we welcome the unilateral and bilateral reductions of nuclear weapons undertaken by nuclear-weapon States. We encourage further efforts to be carried out in a transparent and progressive manner.

Another bargain central to the NPT is the commitment that non-nuclear-weapon States will not develop or acquire nuclear weapons. That bargain is exemplified in the obligations of non-proliferation, which are at the very heart of the Treaty. Sadly, some States appear to have forgotten those obligations and are thereby putting the whole nuclear non-proliferation regime at risk. The international community must

strengthen the framework that reinforces the non-proliferation obligations of the NPT. Australia supports universal application of the strengthened safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) embodied in the additional protocol. The combination of a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol is now established as the contemporary safeguard standard necessary to maintain the integrity of the IAEA safeguards system and the international community's faith in compliance with the NPT. Australia announced earlier this year that it intends to require adoption by States of additional protocols, together with comprehensive safeguard agreements, as a condition for supplying them with Australian uranium.

The risk of NPT parties misusing the Treaty's peaceful nuclear energy provisions in order to acquire the technical basis for a rapid breakout to nuclear weapons is a serious matter for the international community. We believe a new framework is needed to limit the spread of sensitive nuclear technology, while respecting the right of NPT parties to peaceful nuclear energy. Such a framework could include enhanced controls on supply of sensitive technology, strengthened verification and detection in States with such technologies, and internationally guaranteed measures to ensure reliable access to fuel for civil reactors by States that forgo enrichment and reprocessing.

Entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) would greatly enhance international security by inhibiting weapons development by potential new nuclear-weapon States, as well as making it more difficult for States with nuclear weapons to develop more sophisticated warheads. The recent conference of the CTBT parties confirmed the near-universal commitment to the CTBT and its objectives.

Australia continues to urge the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Such a treaty would advance nuclear disarmament by capping the amount of fissile material available for nuclear weapons use and would further strengthen the barriers to leakage of fissile material both to States and, potentially, to terrorists.

As long as terrorists and others remain determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction, the international community must remain vigilant against the threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons. Measures to strengthen the non-proliferation regime which benefit all States must not be held hostage to movement on other NPT issues, important as they may be. Moreover, it is impossible to conceive of a world free of nuclear weapons in the absence of complete and permanent assurances of non-proliferation.

The Chairman: I now invite Mr. Rogelio Pfirter, Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to make a statement.

Mr. Pfirter (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons): I join others in expressing my deepest sympathy regarding the victims of the natural disasters in Guatemala, Pakistan, India and Afghanistan.

It is a great pleasure for me to address this Committee once again to report on the progress and developments in the spheres of chemical disarmament and non-proliferation and international cooperation, and on the activities carried out in implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

I would like, first of all, to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the important position of Chairman. I am very grateful to you for giving me this opportunity to address the Committee. I would also like to express my thanks to the Secretary of the Committee, who facilitated all the arrangements.

The work of the First Committee has a close and long-standing connection to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Chemical Weapons Convention. My presence here today is a reflection of that relationship and the importance we attribute to this forum for our own work.

Since my last intervention, in 2004, the OPCW has registered significant progress on a number of fronts, and considerable momentum is being generated in the implementation of the Convention. However, huge tasks and challenges remain before us: to achieve universal adherence to the Convention, to meet the timelines for destruction it sets out, and to translate its operative provisions into an effective web of national law, implementing authorities and arrangements. Only after that is accomplished can the highest level of assurance to which the Convention aspires be achieved. For that reason, my main message today is to stay the

course and to encourage and sustain the important momentum already created for the immediate future and beyond. The widespread support we are receiving from our ever-expanding group of member States is vital in this endeavour.

Now for the good news: as of this month, the total number of States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention has increased to 174, confirming that the CWC continues to be a fast-growing disarmament treaty — perhaps the fastest in history.

I would like to offer a brief overview of current developments in the area of chemical disarmament and non-proliferation. The six chemical weapons possessor States continue to destroy their declared stockpiles, which originally exceeded 71,000 metric tons of chemical agents and nearly 9 million munitions and containers. Those chemical weapons stocks have been secured, and the destruction of more than 12,000 metric tons — or 17 per cent of the total agent stockpile — has been verified. Similarly, more than one quarter, or 2.3 million, of the declared munitions and containers have been verified as destroyed by OPCW inspection teams.

At the same time, it is evident that the lion's share of the task lies ahead. While most possessor States could complete their destruction campaigns by or before 2007 — or 10 years after the Convention's entry into force — major challenges remain. Of necessity, most of the efforts involved — in terms of destruction campaigns, resources, and inspection time — relate to the two largest stockpiles: in the Russian Federation and in the United States. I have visited destruction sites recently in both States.

In Russia, no less than six facilities are to become operational in the course of the next four years in addition to the destruction facility at Gorny, where 1,000 metric tons have been destroyed to date, with the remainder of those stocks stored there expected to be destroyed by the end of the year. A new facility is about to become operational, hopefully before the end of the year, in Kambarka, and others will follow. Maradykovsky will probably be operational in April next year. I have personally received formal assurances from the Russian Government of its firm determination to move ahead decisively to accelerate the pace of destruction and to meet its obligations on time. Foreign Minister Lavrov, and presidential delegate and Chairman of the Commission for Chemical Disarmament Kiriyenko, as well the officials in charge of the destruction programme proper have all been unanimous in their expressions of commitment and determination to meet the final destruction deadlines by 2012 at the latest. Those are welcome and encouraging signs, as the magnitude of the remaining stockpile of chemical agents in Russia is indeed impressive and the pace of destruction so far has not been nearly as sustained as would have been expected.

In the United States, seven destruction facilities are currently operational. With more than 52 per cent of the United States stockpile destroyed to date, it is clear that there is an unwavering commitment to this crucial disarmament effort. The unmistakable demonstration of political will to comply is of vital importance for the international credibility of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Convention, as members know, foresees April 2012 as the final deadline for the entire destruction effort.

As head of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, I continue to believe that the solemn commitments undertaken by all States parties to the Convention must and will be honoured, and I support Governments in their efforts to achieve that target, no matter how sceptical some may remain and how complex this may seem at this point in time.

In that connection, I wish to recognize very concretely and once again the enormous efforts undertaken by Russia in its destruction programme, as well as the great support Russia is receiving from the Group of Eight through the Global Partnership. I also wish to formally encourage donor countries to continue to engage and to cooperate with Russia in the process. It is a good investment not just for the sake of Russia's destruction programme, but also for the safety of all of Europe and the rest of the world.

In addition to the chemical weapons stockpiles, all of the 64 former chemical weapons production facilities declared by 12 States parties have been permanently inactivated. Eighty per cent of those facilities have already been certified by the OPCW as destroyed or converted to legitimate purposes, with the remainder of the facilities expected to be destroyed or converted by 2007.

Of note is the fact that Libya is now able to convert two of its former production facilities as a result of a change to the verification annex of the Convention approved by the States parties. The

that region. Further meetings have taken place and more will be held in the future.

Dialogue and the persistent promotion of the benefits that accrue to the countries of the region that join the Convention, as Libya has recently done, may well lead to conditions conducive to the achievement of universality without the need to wait indefinitely for the perfect conditions for signature of a comprehensive settlement.

As Director-General of the OPCW, I must warn against the risk of promoting that worthy objective at the cost of jeopardizing universal implementation of the Convention. Any compromise on the CWC, or an undefined delay when complete disarmament and clear conditions prevail, A chemical weapon has thereby not to belong to exclusive systems. Let us remember that we are talking about weapons of mass destruction that have been condemned and outlawed by the international community. No one can expect that by accepting a so-called chemical option open to not adhering to the Chemical Weapons Convention, chemical for peace will increase. Rather the contrary is true. Only then can any country expect recognition of legitimacy should it resort to the use or threat of use of chemical weapons. Indeed, the great majority of humankind is already party to the Convention. Those remaining outside it are ill-served by their attitude towards this important issue.

The Government of Iraq has indicated its intention to adhere to the Convention. That is another promising development, and I have pledged the OPCW's full support and readiness to assist the State in adhering to the Convention. We look forward to further cooperation with the Government of Iraq following an initial training course on the CWC for Iraqi officials conducted at The Hague in July. A follow-up meeting is now being prepared with the assistance of the Kingdom of Jordan to take place before the end of the year to continue preparations for a smooth reduction of Iraq into the OPCW and its verification regime.

The OPCW's commitment to Africa is unblemished. Indeed, it is maturing into a significant cooperative relationship, channelled through our own African member States in The Hague and through the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa. A handful of States remain outside the realm of the Convention. I have met with them over the past few weeks, in Africa and here today in New York. Prospects for their accession are indeed favourable, confirming Africa's long-standing support for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction from their continent and the rest of the world. I am grateful to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, President Konaré, expressed his most high support and commitment to the principles and the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as his desire to work together with the OPCW towards that goal.

The Technical Secretariat's capacity to offer and coordinate assistance in case of an emergency involving the use of chemical weapons demands utmost preparation. This week in Lviv, Ukraine, an important event is being held: the Joint Assistance Open Field exercise. Through that exercise, we aim to address the capacities of participating member States, international organizations including NATO and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to provide various aspects of emergency assistance in accordance with their mandates and coordinate their actions in a disaster-stricken area. The possibility of the release of toxic chemicals by terrorists has given rise to the increased interest by States parties to the Convention in implementation of article X of the Convention. The exercise focuses on a fictitious scenario and aims at enhancing the collective ability to respond to unforeseen events.

Further efforts are being made by the OPCW also to implement articles X and XI of the Convention, which relate to international cooperation and assistance and which are of particular interest to our many member States from developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition.

In the area of international cooperation, the OPCW continues to build the capacities of its member States to support implementation of the Convention and continues to promote the peaceful application of chemical and industry-related activities.

Most recently, we completed the second edition of the analytical skills development course for technical personnel and the sixth edition of the OPCW Associate Programme, with the participation of more than 100 experts from 71 member States with developing economies or economies in transition. It has been possible to conduct and expand such programmes and others that provide equipment

The Chairman: Mr. Pfirter's statement will be of service on Wednesday, when we discuss other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Al-Anbaki (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me on behalf of the Iraqi delegation to seize this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), at the thematic debate of the First Committee and to extend to him our profound thanks for the support and assistance he and his organization are providing to Iraq in preparation for Iraq's adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The OPCW has assisted Iraq in many ways to prepare for technicians who will undertake the work when Iraq accedes to the Convention, which we hope will be soon.

I should like to speak of a number of issues related to this matter. On 12 August 2004, the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs sent a letter to Director-General Pfirter, in which he underscored Iraq's upholding of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and recalled Iraq's intention to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention as soon as an Iraqi Government had been elected.

Iraq participated in the Second Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia, which was held in Beijing from 20 to 22 September 2004. My country also participated as an observer at the ninth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which was held in The Hague from 29 November to 3 December 2004. A delegation of Iraqi experts participated in a seminar held in Cyprus by the OPCW, in cooperation with the Government of Cyprus, from 13 to 15 June 2005. Moreover, Iraqi experts participated in a workshop held by the OPCW in The Hague from 6 to 8 July 2005, and preparations are being made to participate in a seminar that will be held in the Jordanian capital.

On this occasion, I wish to thank the Japanese Government, which has provided assistance and facilitated the participation of Iraqi experts. I thank the United States and United Kingdom Missions in The Hague, both of which provided assistance in this area. Also, I would like also to thank Mr. Ian Tudor for his work in the OPCW; he was central in facilitating the participation of Iraqi experts in these seminars. Here, I would like to emphasize that an ad hoc committee has

been established to give in-depth consideration to recommendations to Iraq's legislature concerning accession to the CWC.

The Chairman: We shall now turn to the introduction of draft resolutions. I give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Ms. Mtshali (South Africa): South Africa welcomes the opportunity to introduce the New Agenda Coalition's (NAC) draft resolution pertaining to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments". The draft resolution has already been submitted to the Secretariat and will be issued as document A/C.1/60/L.4.

I am taking the floor on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition partners, namely, Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden and my own country, South Africa.

In the New Agenda Coalition statement that was delivered during the general debate of this Committee on 3 October 2005, we expressed the view that the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime faces a significant challenge at the present time. We also stated that the NAC continues to believe that international peace and security remain threatened by the possibility that nuclear weapons could be used.

This year's NAC draft resolution coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and with the lack of any substantive outcome of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as with the inability of the recent General Assembly summit to reach agreement on matters relating to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. This is stated in the preambular paragraphs of our draft resolution.

Our draft resolution this year is again short, and it focuses on what we believe to be the essential elements required for maintaining further progress and momentum in the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation areas. As such, it explicitly recognizes and seeks to underline the importance of the NPT and its universality to achieving nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

The draft resolution seeks to convey a specific message about the importance of and the need for implementing commitments already made on nuclear disarmament, in particular those from the NPT Review Conferences of 1995 and 2000. It is therefore similar to, and builds on, the NAC resolution of 2004 (resolution 59/75), and presents an approach that emphasizes compliance with nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation commitments.

The draft resolution also reaffirms the NAC's belief that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes requiring urgent, irreversible progress on both fronts.

The partners of the New Agenda Coalition have endeavoured to consult widely on our draft resolution, both in Geneva and in New York. We appreciate the constructive comments received from delegations, including most of the nuclear-weapon States.

As the text of our draft resolution has already been shared with all delegations, I will not delve further into detail, except to say that, in our view, the text is drafted in a manner that should enable all States to support it, since it seeks to uphold previous commitments arrived at by consensus.

We therefore believe that it is important, in the light of current events, for all of us to show our consolidated support for nuclear disarmament.

The Chairman: There seem to be no further delegations wishing to introduce draft resolutions at this stage. Before adjourning the meeting, I give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mrs. Bonilla Galvão de Queiroz (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish, through you, Mr. Chairman, to express our appreciation for the warm solidarity conveyed to us by other delegations, both formally and informally, on the devastating storm that struck my country. I echo the thanks that my Permanent Representative expressed during this morning's General Assembly plenary meeting for the decisive backing the international community has accorded us.

Lastly, we cannot but express our condolences to our brothers and sisters in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.